

CJR

COLUMBIA
JOURNALISM
REVIEW

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2011 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2011

CRACKS
IN A FOUNDATION:
FREEDOM FORUM'S TRIALS

PRESS VS. PENTAGON

THE FUTURE
OF FOREIGN NEWS

THE ROAD TO KABUL

LETTER FROM JERUSALEM

AFGHANISTAN AND BEYOND



THE 2002 BATTEN MEDAL

And Accompanying \$5,000 Prize

The Batten Medal honors newspaper work that shows deep concern for the lives and cares of everyday people. If ever there were a time to honor such journalism, it is now.



2001 Batten Medal winner Shirley Ruedy of the Gazette of Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The Batten Medal competition is a broad and unusual contest aimed at recognizing a body of work that exemplifies the values of the late James K. Batten. Past recipients have included a newsfeature writer for a wire service, an investigative reporter for a small weekly, a special projects writer for a Texas paper and a health columnist for one in Iowa. Many of the past winners did the kind of work loved by readers but often overlooked by traditional national journalism contests.

Jim Batten was a highly-respected reporter, editor and corporate executive. His life and career were marked by passion, courage, advocacy for the underdog and a belief that journalism should help build a sense of community.

The Foundation for the Batten Medal, which administers this competition, is once again seeking entries that reflect his values.

RULES AND ENTRY DETAILS

- Entries must be postmarked no later than February 15, 2002.
- The Batten Medal honors a body of work, rather than a single series or project. The entry should contain no more than 10 articles, photographs, editorials or graphics. A series may count as one of the 10 items.
- The competition is open to any reporter, columnist, editorial writer, photographer or graphic artist whose work has appeared in a daily or weekly newspaper in the United States within the three calendar years prior to January 1, 2002.
- The nomination letter should indicate how the entry represents the values described above.
- This certification should be signed and dated and should accompany each entry: "I certify the information included in the accompanying materials for the 2002 Batten Medal accurately and truthfully reflects the entry, dates of publication and outreach."

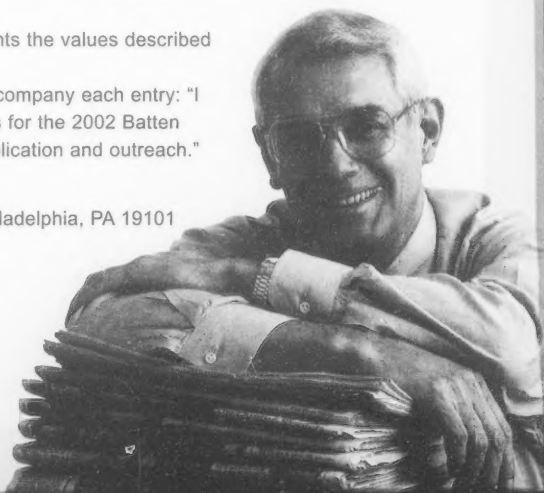
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Telephone: 215-854-5905 Fax: 215-854-4463 e-mail: stalbez@phillynews.com

ENTRIES SHOULD BE MAILED TO:

David Yarnold c/o San Jose Mercury News,
750 Ridder Park Drive, San Jose, CA 95190

Jim Batten



HEARST: WHERE JOURNALISM OF DISTINCTION IS AN EVERYDAY STORY



When the power went out in California, one paper shed light on the story.

The state of California is the world's sixth-largest economy, yet it is in the midst of a power crisis. The combination of rising natural gas prices, reliance on out-of-state generators, and the botched deregulation of the electricity market has threatened California's economy and jeopardized the quality of life for its citizens.

The San Francisco Chronicle was relentless in pursuit of this story from the beginning and continues to give comprehensive coverage. To date, it has devoted tens of

thousands of column inches to the power crisis with breaking news, investigative and explanatory pieces, and guides to educate consumers on how to cope. The Chronicle was first to forecast the bankruptcy of Pacific Gas and Electric. The paper also debunked the power industry myth of a huge, growing demand, and uncovered evidence of generators manipulating the market.

The energy crisis is the kind of story that makes good newspapers indispensable. Its complexities can't be explained in a three-minute sound

bite. They demand in-depth reporting and perspective. Helping readers understand both the causes and the effects is one more way the Hearst Newspapers enrich readers' lives every day.



To read more on the energy crisis, visit the San Francisco Chronicle online at www.sfgate.com/energy.

CJR CONTENTS

"To assess the performance of journalism . . . to help stimulate continuing improvement in the profession, and to speak out for what is right, fair, and decent" —From the founding editorial, 1961

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2002

VOICES

JOEL SIMON 64
Global censorship

BARBARA STEWART 66
Portraits of Grief

FRANK CLANCY 68
Writers' rights

SCOTT SHERMAN 70
Farewell *Lingua Franca*

LAWRENCE K. GROSSMAN 72
Television

GENEVA OVERHOLSER 74
Newspapers

BOOK REVIEWS

**COLORING THE NEWS:
HOW CRUSADING FOR
DIVERSITY HAS CORRUPTED
AMERICAN JOURNALISM** 75
By William McGowan
Reviewed by Peter Schrag

**GOOD WORK:
WHEN EXCELLENCE
AND ETHICS MEET** 78
By Mihaly Csikszentmihaly,
William Damon, and Howard Gardner
Reviewed by Tom Goldstein

BOOK REPORTS 79
By James Boylan

COVER: 10/22/01 AMERICANS DROP BOMBS ON TALIBAN POSITIONS, JUST 300 METERS AWAY FROM NORTHERN ALLIANCE FORCES AND AMERICAN JOURNALISTS, INCLUDING TYLER HICKS, SHOOTING FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PHOTO: PETER BLAKE/CORBIS SABA

SPECIAL REPORT: AFGHANISTAN AND BEYOND

AT THE FRONT

ACCESS DENIED The Pentagon has clamped down on the press as never before. By Neil Hickey 26
Q&A: Larry Flynt's War

IN AFGHANISTAN Warlords, border bribes, and the dreams of a war-ravaged country. By Stephen Franklin. Photos by Pete Souza 32

THREE MINUTES FROM DEATH ABC's Jim Wooten tells how his cameraman's eye for B-roll saved their lives. 36

CASUALTIES The eight journalists killed in Afghanistan 39



CULTURE CLASH Satellite phones and digital video in a country where horses are a primary means of transport. Photo Essay by Yannis Kontos 40

GOING GLOBAL

REVERBERATIONS How ten regional papers responded to September 11. By John Giuffo and Joshua Lipton 44

THE FUTURE OF FOREIGN COVERAGE How long will we give so much attention to international news? By Michael Parks 52

HIGH MARKS IN LOW TIMES Surveys show the public needs to know. By Andrew Kohut 54

ARTICLES

LETTER FROM JERUSALEM Covering the nine-to-five war. By Steve McNally 14

THE FREEDOM FORUM FALTERS A questionable investment strategy hurts a high-rolling foundation that was already narrowing its vision. By Russ Baker 20

BOOM AND BUST *The Industry Standard* lived and died with the story it helped create. By Todd Woody 58

DEPARTMENTS

LETTERS 4

CURRENTS 8

DARTS & LAURELS 18

THE LOWER CASE

INSIDE BACK COVER



When Foreign News Comes Home, the Pew Fellows are There

More than ever, it's obvious international stories have a direct impact on all Americans. We ignore foreign news at our peril.

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LETTERS

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

As someone whose thirty-seven-year career in journalism has largely overlapped with CJR's, I found your "40 Years of Change" (November/December) a feast for the mind and heart alike. So I hope it won't seem churlish of me to suggest that you may have overlooked one major development. The big media story of the past forty years, I would argue, is not "Concentration of Power," as one of your essays contends, but the decentralization of media power.

Everywhere you turn, supposedly entrenched media monopolies are being threatened or replaced by challengers that didn't even exist a generation ago. The Big Three TV networks have lost their hegemony to upstarts like CNN, Fox, PBS, and the cable channels. Monopoly daily newspapers are losing ground to flourishing alternative weekly papers (perhaps the last best hope of attracting younger audiences to the printed word) and slick city magazines. Dow-Jones struggles to fend off Bloomberg. And of course every entrenched medium is threatened by the upstart Internet.

"Who's going to buy AOL/Time Warner?" your essay asks rhetorically. As a matter of fact, the same question was asked about Time Warner just a few years ago. It was indeed bought — by an upstart named AOL that hadn't existed ten years earlier.

DAN ROTTENBERG
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Nice to see Breslin getting a look in on your pages. And it's refreshing to read a piece in CJR about the changes at *The New York Times* that doesn't take as its premise the assumption that the paper has been going to hell in a handbasket ever since young Sulzberger took over. But for a

magazine devoted to the news business, you sure missed some stories. How about Pete Hamill's stint at the *New York Post*? Or the strike at the *Daily News*? More egregiously, what about the debut of *The*

New York Review of Books? Or are you so wedded to awards and ratings and life-style reporting that journalism about ideas doesn't count? Could that be why you mentioned Murray Kempton's Pulitzer, but didn't even give us one sentence of his own writing? For example this one, on the death of I.F. Stone (someone else who seems to have escaped CJR's notice): "Our children's children will read Izzy as we read Mencken or Macauley." Clay Felker is a nice man, and Abe Rosenthal did create the Home section of the *Times*, but do you really think that anyone now alive can remember a single word either man ever wrote?

D.D. GUTTENPLAN
London, England

Your 40th anniversary issue is now required reading in the Media Law class Craig LaMay and I teach at Northwestern University. We combine law and graduate journalism students in one class

to convey how essential both professions are in a free and open society. The anniversary issue will enrich our curriculum.

NEWTON N. MINOW
Chicago, Illinois

Journalists know that three of our most frequent sins are writing headlines that go further than the story; piling on criticism; and failing to ask for a comment representing the other sides of the story.

Your sidebar on Knight Ridder ("The Rise and Decline of Knight Ridder," November/December issue) sinned all three ways.

Fortunately, the story didn't support the head. But the story did repeat, apparently without original reporting, the inferences of others who suggest that something bad has happened to our journalism. Had I been asked for a comment — which I'd suggest is necessary even in an analysis, if that's what this piece was — I would have said that Knight Ridder:

■ Generally staffs its newsrooms far, far better than almost any other company in the country — and is proud of that;

■ Has fourteen journalists in the war zone as this is being written;

■ In 2001 wrote the definitive story about the Florida presidential election after inspecting 64,248 undervotes and 110,000 overvotes — about seven months before a consortium of other media organizations came up with similar results;

■ In 2001 investigated everything from the cocoa industry in the Ivory Coast (which appears to be using child slaves) to the government of Luzerne



County, Pennsylvania (where the *Wilkes-Barre Times Leader* found that the county wastes millions in an antiquated system of favoritism and cronyism);

■ Publicly has said that it has no desire to be the most profitable newspaper company — because that could impair our journalism.

Had I been asked, I would have said that no other newspaper or newspaper company can make those statements. I also might have suggested that the author do some original reporting by reading some of our newspapers, large and small — did he read a single one? — and drawing his own conclusions rather than parroting others. That would have been fairer to Knight Ridder and to its 5,000 journalists.

JERRY CEPPOS
Vice president, News
Knight Ridder
San Jose, California

OTHER ANSWERS

Your September/October issue on morale was a true classic, and should be required reading for anyone who plans to make journalism a career.

I also have a suggestion for those who are on the verge of crashing and burning at daily newspapers due to constant deadline pressure, internal politics, and rapidly changing ownership.

Don't give up on your career. Weekly newspapers are desperate for your skills. You will probably make less money with fewer benefits, but the satisfaction and a good night's sleep are priceless.

At age fifty-six, I left a daily with a circulation of 20,000 more than two years ago for a weekly in the north woods of Maine that in a good week sells 3,000 papers. It's not only been good for my mental health, but the job will probably extend my career past the point where I'd consider hang-

ing up my clipboard if I were still employed at a daily.

MICHAEL D. LANGE
Editor
The Moosehead Messenger
Greenville, Maine

Jane Gottlieb and the other contributors who helped us understand why journalists quit careers in what should be the prime working days of their lives did a very nice job. Industry leaders should take note before they totally ruin every newspaper in the country.

But I apparently failed to make sure Jane understood just how much a role my faith played in my decision to give up a career, a noble calling I loved and once expected to do until I die.

Gottlieb focused on the daily irritants, the newspaper's unwillingness to give up old traditions, the decades-old practices that never changed. Those were crucial. But she failed to grasp that I was searching and in that search, in my prayers, in my reflections, in my attempts to reconcile some of the totally useless things expected of me with a desire to live a life of meaning, each irritation associated with the job seemed an answer to my prayers, a reaffirmation of the call to leave.

So it's important to note that while all the things I mentioned — my son's disabilities, low pay, the drag on family life, the unrelenting demands of a never-ending news cycle, and a paper driven more by financial concerns — all played a role in my departure, I left because God called me out. No sea change in working conditions, no worldly gift could have

changed my mind. Making me publisher would not have kept me on the job. I had to go.

I am sorry I didn't make that clearer.

JOE DEW
Raleigh, North Carolina

I laud your effort to explore newsroom morale. But it is disingenuous of you to present the results of your mailout survey, with a response rate of just 14 percent, as though they came from a real poll.

Yes, the "How the Poll Was Done" box did note that "pollsters call this kind of sample non-random and self-selected" and conceded that "we cannot be sure" the sample represents the views of all working journalists. In plain English, though, pollsters also call this kind of sample "pretty much useless." You report, for instance, that 84 percent of those who responded say that low morale is widespread. Another interpretation is that only 12 percent of those surveyed were moved to say that morale is low.

I'm prepared to believe that the real incidence of morale problems in the U.S. newsroom is somewhere between those extremes, and even probably toward the high end of it. But this attempt at a survey doesn't answer the question, and CJR should know better than to act as though it does.

STEVE DOIG
Knight Chair in Journalism
Arizona State University
Tempe, Arizona

DEVELOPING NEWS

Re: the lead Dart in CJR's September/October issue, which

Kid stuff.

Bring a richer dimension to coverage of social issues and deepen your understanding of how policies affect young lives.

Journalism Fellowships in Child & Family Policy

Periodic weeklong sessions near the nation's capital combine briefings, site visits and advanced journalism training.

Nonresidential fellowships range from one week to six months and provide stipends of up to \$25,000.

Applications must be postmarked by March 16.

Visit our Web site at www.child-family.umd.edu. Or, call 301/405-7200.



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questioned "what sort of news was being advanced in Lynchburg." *The News & Advance* published two paid advertising sections about a new development. They had nothing to do with news, or the newsroom. Our publisher, Terry Jamerson, is the developer's daughter-in-law.

We published a front-page story about a new road that connects two highways and the development, which is the largest in the city. We have written a number of stories about the planned road over the years and written other stories about various aspects of the development, which will eventually include a town center and retirement community. That's the news, not the advertising supplements.

JOSEPH P. STINNETT
Managing editor
The News & Advance
Lynchburg, Virginia

The editors reply: The difference between advertising and news

would have been difficult for readers to recognize.

HOW OLD IS OLD?

Perhaps I missed it. Perhaps Dante Chinni omitted it while writing "Mitch Inc.," in his account of the turbulent, stimulating life and works of Mitch Albom in the September/October issue. But when he quotes Albom, "You know, I'm not that old a guy," I have a simple question. How old is he?

HAL DAVIS
Dayton, Ohio

The editors reply: At the time of his interview with Chinni, Albom was forty-two.

SATISFIED PATIENT

In awarding a Laurel to *The Seattle Times* for its series "Informed Consent" on the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research

Center (July/August), CJR has conferred its highest praise on a most undeserving journalistic effort. To the casual reader the stories about the Hutch's conduct in clinical trials and patient care may seem credible. But to anyone who knows the facts, these stories are fundamentally flawed, biased, and reckless. I investigated the facts behind those stories a decade ago when I was diagnosed with leukemia. I subsequently had a bone marrow transplant at the Hutch, and am convinced now, as I was then, that it is the world's finest cancer institution, and has always acted ethically, responsibly, and with the highest regard for the safety of its patients.

Readers who want to get the real story will find a thorough and forthright response to *The Seattle Times* series on the Hutch Web site, www.FH.CRC.org. The Web site also includes a letter I wrote disputing *The Seattle Times* sto-

ries, which the newspaper neither acknowledged nor published.

LAURA LANDRO
New York, New York

COVERAGE COSTS

I enjoyed your Laurel to the *Weekly Planet* for its critique of the mayor's race here in St. Petersburg (CJR, July/August). When venerable journalistic institutions lack the integrity to "do right" or are blinded by their own self-interests, problems occur and confidence is eroded. Such was the case here. Although I lost the mayor's race and have been out of public office since April 1, there is no good reason for any newspaper to continue to take cracks at me, yet it continues. Where is the justice that truly holds these individuals and corporations responsible? Proving malice is an expensive and time-consuming proposition. Nonetheless, free people

Congratulations to the winners of the 2001 Nancy Dickerson Whitehead Award

for Excellence in Reporting on Drug and Alcohol Problems



Drug Strategies

Drug Strategies is a nonprofit research institute based in Washington, DC. For more information about Drug Strategies and the Nancy Dickerson Whitehead Award, including past winners, please visit our website at www.drugstrategies.org.

First Place Broadcast Award
Martin Smith, Lowell Bergman
"Drug Wars"
Frontline

First Place Print Award
The Sacramento Bee, The Fresno Bee, The Modesto Bee
"A Madness Called Meth"
The McClatchy Company

Second Place Print Award
The Spokesman-Review
"Amber Struggles to Shake Drug's Hold" and "An Infinite Love"
(Spokane, WA)

Broadcast Honorable Mention
Lai Ling Jew
"All the Rage?"
Dateline NBC

Drug Strategies is now accepting submissions for the year 2002 **Nancy Dickerson Whitehead Award**. Winners must demonstrate the highest standards of reporting on drug and alcohol issues. The award honors the late Nancy Dickerson Whitehead's deep commitment to finding more effective answers to the nation's drug problems.

Two journalists, one from print and one from broadcast and electronic media, will each receive an award of \$10,000. Entries must consist of a single article or broadcast or a series of related articles or broadcasts published or aired between March 31, 2001 and March 31, 2002. The entry deadline is April 30, 2002. Awards will be presented at a luncheon in New York in November 2002.

For information and applications for the year 2002 Award contact: **Nancy Dickerson Whitehead Award**
1150 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 800
Washington, D.C. 20036
email: dspolicy@aol.com

Award Committee:

Marie Brenner	Bill Moyers
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Walter Cronkite	Diane Sawyer
John Dickerson	Leslie Stahl
Katharine Graham (1917-2001)	Mark Whitaker

lose because fewer "good people" will run for public office and we Americans are stuck with the crooks and their cronies and/or relatives.

KATHLEEN FORD
Former city councilmember and mayoral candidate
St. Petersburg, Florida

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

In your July/August issue, you aimed a Dart at South Florida television station WTVJ/NBC6 for an investigation of a local funeral home owner. You claimed that our reporter had a conflict of interest [because her father had been involved in a bitter business dispute with the owner]. You also stated that, "as reported by the *Miami New Times*," our disguised on-camera source, who was accusing the funeral home chain of health violations, was "readily recognized by former co-workers as having been fired" from the fu-

neral home. The fact is, *Miami New Times* was mistaken: the man they identified is not the source. And you failed to note that WTVJ conducted its own internal probe before the stories aired and found no conflict whatsoever with the information under investigation, nor with our reporter's motivation. The fact that law-enforcement officials had the funeral chain under investigation before, during, and after the airing of our reports demonstrates that, no matter who's doing the reporting, there is certainly a story to be told here.

TIM GERAGHTY
Vice president and news director
NBC6
Miramar, Florida

CLARIFICATION

A Dart in the September/October issue named a number of news organizations whose

sports reporters had accepted an invitation to participate in a tarpon tournament, promoted by a marina in Boca Grande, Florida, that offered free lodging, food, and drink, as well as free guided fishing. *The Sarasota Herald-Tribune* subsequently advised CJR that even though its reporter's name had appeared on the marina's freebies list, he had in fact, as supported by photocopies of his expense report, paid the marina directly for his lodging, food, and drink (though not for the fishing-boat costs). *The Tampa Tribune*, for its part, advised CJR that its reporter had partaken only of the fishing, and on October 12, further advised CJR that it had sent a check for \$200 to the marina to cover its portion of the fishing costs in keeping with its new ethics policy. That policy, prompted by the Dart and outlined in a letter to CJR by Duke Moss, the paper's senior editor for sports, now in-

cludes payment for all professional services provided in the reporting process by naturalists or such outdoors experts as hunting and fishing guides and charter-boat captains.

CORRECTIONS

CJR's 40th anniversary issue (November/December) contained several errors. The Bloomberg News Service was launched in 1990, not in 1981. The first name of the pop idol Jimi Hendrix was misspelled as Jimmy. During the years 1966-81, *The Boston Globe* won not eight Pulitzer Prizes, but twelve. All-news radio originated in 1960, in San Francisco, not in 1961 in Los Angeles. And the garbled timeline on pages 128-129 was supposed to read as follows: "International Press Institute Marks 50th Anniversary... Independent Journalistic Sites Fade on Internet."

The biggest threats facing America's children won't be stopped by a gas mask.

Children and Trauma
April 21-26, 2002

Join 30 professional journalists to examine how trauma affects children. Renowned experts will discuss the effects of domestic violence or abuse; the impact of poverty and of living in high-crime neighborhoods; the lives of young refugees; the long-term effects of Sept. 11 and more.

Application Deadline: Monday, Feb. 25, 2002

Fellowships cover lodging, materials and a travel stipend to Washington, D.C.

To apply, send the following to Beth Frerking, director, at the address below:

- a biographical sketch and one sample of your work
- a brief statement of why you want to attend the conference
- a short nominating letter from a supervisor

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CURRENTS

IN REVIEW: THE THREAT TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Some journalists and open-government advocates fear that Attorney General John Ashcroft's new Justice Department policy on Freedom of Information Act requests may usher in a new era of governmental secrecy under the guise of protecting privacy. Changes in FOIA policy are typical whenever a president from the other party is elected, but this latest shift has been "more creepy than expected," says Lucy Dalglish, executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. The mere mention of a name in a record now, she says, can be used to deny an FOIA request on the ground that it would violate someone's privacy.

Ashcroft's broad edict, issued in October in the wake of the terrorist attacks, encourages government officials to find reasons to withhold information, and signals that the Justice Department will back them up. This is a significant departure from the general policy of openness adopted by former Attorney General Janet Reno, who advised officials to release records unless disclosure would result in foreseeable harm. While Ashcroft frames the issue as one of national security in a time of war, his memo also directs officials to be mindful of "institutional, commercial, and personal privacy interests" when considering FOIA requests. "These steps are contrary to the spirit of the FOIA," says Patrick Leahy, Democratic senator from Vermont and one of the staunchest FOIA advocates on Capitol Hill. The Free-



Attorney General Ashcroft

dom of Information Act, he says, "is intended to give Americans answers to questions they believe are important, not just the information the government wants them to believe."

Rose Ciotta, an investigative reporter at *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, worries that federal agencies such as the FBI, the FDA, the FAA, and the SEC will use the broad new language to keep secret the kind of information that in the past has been available. "What struck me is that privacy is already an exemption," says Ciotta, whose specialty is analyzing government databases. "Emphasizing it sends a heavy message to government officials to use privacy interests more widely." Indeed, constricting the ambit of disclosable records on the basis of protecting privacy has been on the agenda of FOIA foes since the 1980s.

The 1966 law that established the FOIA — which applies only to executive branch agencies and cabinet-level departments — allows government officials to deny requests for information only if they run afoul of nine broad exemptions. The most common regard matters

of national security, personal privacy, law enforcement, trade secrets, and internal agency memos. The others cover personnel information, reports from regulated financial institutions, information exempted by other statutes, and oil and gas drilling information.

The act's privacy exemption, for example, was intended by Congress to protect individuals from unwarranted intrusions, not to be used as a justification by agencies to shield their activities from public scrutiny. The danger is that "invasion of privacy" can justify withholding just about anything. Rather than cast a cloak of confidentiality over all government records that may raise privacy issues, a better solution is for agencies to use a balancing test that weighs — case by case — the social and public benefits of disclosure against the individual value of privacy.

Some past administrations have also defined privacy exemptions broadly. Release of President Nixon's infamous "enemies list," for example, was blocked on privacy grounds. So were documents pertaining to the U.S. promise to uphold human rights in Haiti, and others related to the organized-crime ties of Daniel Flood, a former Pennsylvania congressman who was convicted of conspiracy to solicit campaign contributions from people seeking federal government contracts. "The big question," says Anders Gyllenhaal, executive editor of the *Raleigh News & Observer* and FOI chairman of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, "is that we can't tell what

the government is going to do. There is a new climate in the country since September 11."

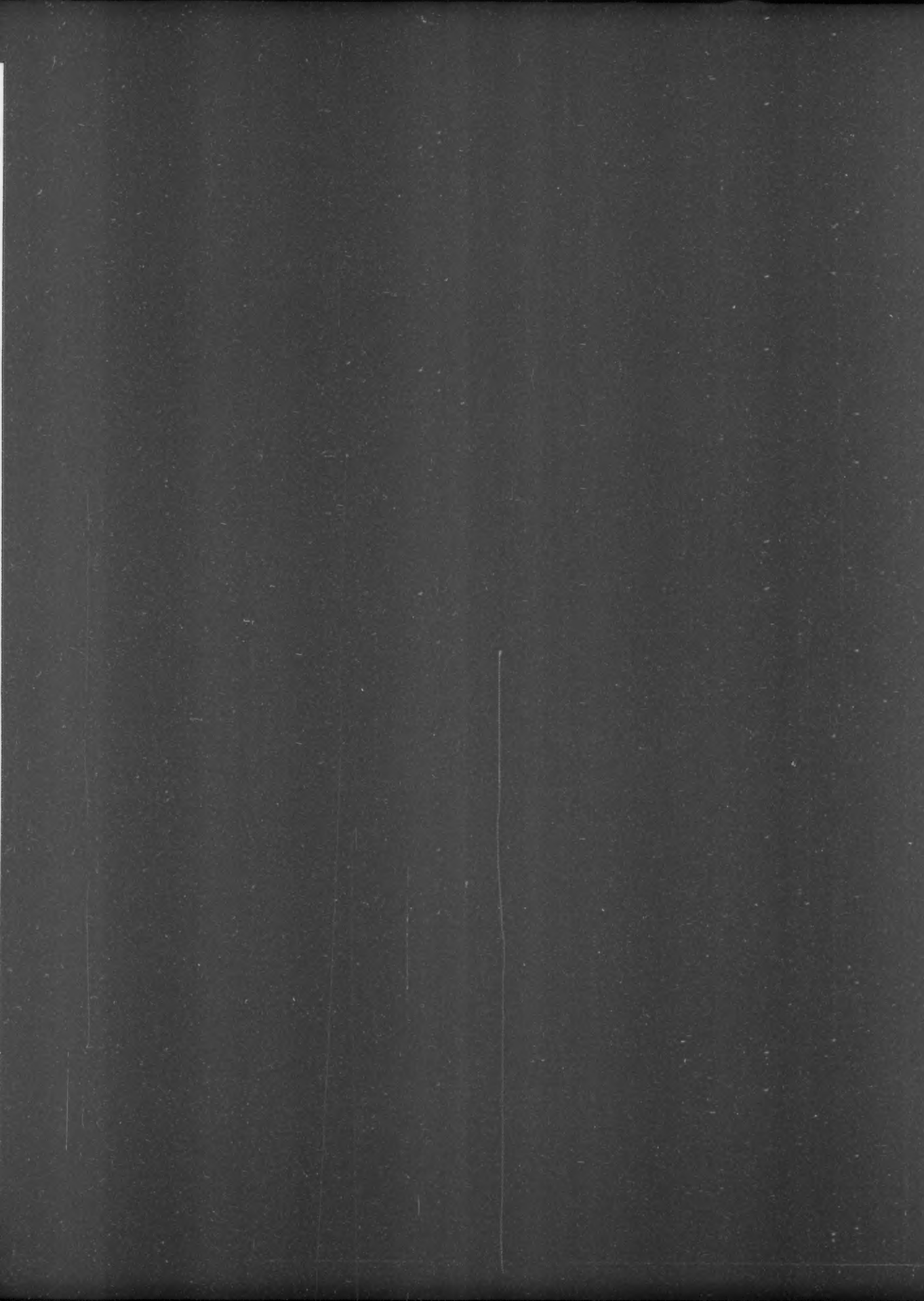
Another concern with the Ashcroft policy is the signal it sends to state governments, all of which have adopted open-records laws. Jim Newcomb of the Chicago-based Better Government Association, which just completed a study of the various state FOI laws, says, "Everyone was already pretty unhappy with state FOI laws, because they're shot full of loopholes. Now state officials can hide behind Ashcroft's memo. When you leave discretion like that to the government, that's when the funny stuff happens."

Daniel J. Metcalfe, co-director of the Justice Department's Office of Information and Privacy since 1981, readily acknowledges the heightened emphasis on personal privacy in Ashcroft's policy, but plays down the fears of Dalglish, Newcomb, and others. "In the context of the historical development of the FOIA, with the succession of attorney general memoranda over the years," the Ashcroft memo, he says, "ought not be viewed as such an alarming development."

The *Inquirer's* Ciotta, though, is far from sanguine. "The news media must be especially vigilant," she says. "Journalists need to pay particular attention and monitor any cases that are out of bounds with accepted privacy issues."

—Martin E. Halstuk
Halstuk, a former reporter and editor, teaches media law in the College of Communications at Pennsylvania State University.

AP WIDEWORLD; KENNETH JAMES ET



TRAUMA: JOURNALISTS COUNSELING JOURNALISTS

When the first tower of the World Trade Center fell, the force threw David Handschuh down the block, breaking his leg and leaving him crumpled beneath a car. But unlike most of his colleagues who covered the tragedy on September 11, Handschuh, a photographer for the *New York Daily News*, was somewhat prepared to handle the physical and emotional trauma. Months earlier he had volunteered for the first training session of Newscoverage Unlimited's Critical Incident Response Team, a fledgling support group for journalists who suffer work-related trauma. While he recuperated from surgery, Handschuh put his training to work, phoning other journalists who had been at the scene to check on their physical and mental well-being.

What he heard isn't pretty. One reporter showers repeatedly, in a vain attempt to remove the smell of the carnage that is lodged, not in his pores, but in his psyche. Another is often awakened by a mental slideshow of horrible images. Some did not want to return to ground zero, but feared that refusing to go would hurt their careers. Others were considering leaving journalism. "Hiding behind a camera, or a pad and pencil," Handschuh says, "is not adequate protection against what we face."

Covering news can affect journalists over time, says Gretel Daugherty, a free-lance photojournalist and a response team volunteer. "We bear witness to the worst things that happen to humanity," she says. "Then we're expected to turn in our story and go on to the next."

It was a similar realization that led Robert Frank to form Newscoverage Unlimited in November 2000. When Swiss-



Helping hands: Practicing support skills at a New York workshop

air Flight 111 plunged into the ocean off the coast of Nova Scotia in September 1998, Frank, then a public affairs officer for the Canadian Air Force Reserves, helped manage the flow of information from Halifax. He saw firsthand how covering the news can bruise journalists. "It had never occurred to me that reporters would be affected by covering a story," Frank says. "I always thought of newspeople as dispassionate."

Frank directs Newscoverage — which has about forty volunteers in various capacities — from his Montreal office. The group's first project was to create the response team. Team members — journalists all — are trained to spot signs of trauma in their colleagues, to help them cope, and, when necessary, to steer them to professional help.

Often, Frank says, the effects of work-related trauma are delayed, coming weeks and even months after the event. Symptoms range from a general feeling of unease to depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Anger, emotional numbness, and substance abuse are common.

After the attacks, Newscoverage set up a training seminar in October in New York. The good news, Frank says, is that "most of these people are going to be okay; but there is a significant minority of people who will need additional professional help."

Seed money for Newscoverage Unlimited (www.newscoverage.org) was provided by The National Press Photographers Association, the University of Washington's Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, and Turner Broadcasting. But the organization's future, Frank says, depends on the willingness of the journalistic community to volunteer and offer support.

The horror of September 11 makes the need clear. Before then, Frank says, "I was still trying to convince the world that post-traumatic stress among journalists is real. There's been a total, overnight change in attitude. Now it's okay to be affected."

— Christine Ballew-Gonzales

SOUND BITE

"Our government has urged us not to print or broadcast Osama bin Laden's crazy harangues for fear that his medieval vision — which justifies the slaughter of innocent civilians — would inflame new adherents. It has detained large numbers of foreigners in this country indefinitely without charge, using the immigration statutes to create something very close to a system of preventative detention. Mostly, we don't know who the detainees are, where they are, or how many they are. It has promulgated a system of military tribunals that, according to the vice president, could conceivably try and therefore even execute some of these people without any provision for recourse to constitutionally established courts, let alone journalistic access."

Now I know that we're living in a time of extraordinary peril and that serious people can find serious arguments for such measures. But I come back to the fundamental matter of journalistic duty. It's not enough to debate these measures. It's our duty to find out what's really going on — to make our own independent decisions on what we publish and broadcast, with a heavy presumption that publishing and broadcasting are, in a free society, what we exist to do; and to commit resources to uncovering what's being unreasonably withheld in the name of national security."

— Joseph Lelyveld, retired editor of *The New York Times*, at the annual dinner for the Committee to Protect Journalists, in November

RADIO: STATIC FROM CLEAR CHANNEL

Clear Channel Communications, the nation's largest radio company (1,200 stations, more than \$3.5 billion a year in advertising revenues) has adopted an unorthodox p.r. strategy in a dispute with the small but influential trade publication *Inside Radio*. Clear Channel, based in San Antonio, operates a parody Web site that makes scathing personal allegations about *Inside Radio*'s owner and publisher, Jerry Del Colliano.

At first glance, the site, *insideradio.com*, could be mistaken for *Inside Radio*'s own home page, *insideradio.com* — except, that is, for a doctored photograph of a man with his head buried in his own posterior, captioned "Jerry checks with an inside source."

Del Colliano filed suit in New York federal court in July seeking \$115 million in damages. "They've made a mockery of me," he says. His "couple-of-million-dollar company," he contends, has never "spent a dime" on legal defense in twenty-seven years.

The earliest version of *Inside Radio* was distributed to the radio industry via fax in 1998, and the parody soon moved online. Articles on the site cast Del Colliano as a "shakedown artist," and a "malicious terrorist." Another story urges readers to switch to other publications, including Clear Channel's own *M Street Radio*. A highlighted blurb offers \$100 for "dirt on Del Corleone."

More seriously, the site alleges that Del Colliano has used the threat of unfavorable press coverage to "extort" advertising or \$425-per-year subscriptions from radio executives.

And in Clear Channel's case, the site claims that Del Colliano used such threats to try to pressure Clear Channel into buying his company for a vastly inflated, eight-figure sum. (Both sides agree there were buyout talks at some point, but disagree about who ultimately rejected whom.)

A spokesperson for Clear Channel declined to comment on the dispute, saying the company does not discuss pending



litigation. Court filings show that the mock Web site is largely the work of Randy Michaels, a former shock jock who is c.e.o. of Clear Channel's radio group. Michaels's on- and off-air antics (pretending to liquefy a frog in a blender on air; dropping his pants at a convention) are the stuff of legend — and the occasional lawsuit — in the radio industry. He once told a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, "I've never grown up. It gets me in trouble, but it's the key to my success."

Michaels has taken his complaints beyond the Web site. Back in November 2000, Clear Channel filed a \$10 million suit in federal court in New York against Del Colliano. Before the trial could begin, however, Clear Channel terminated the case and re-filed in a state court in Texas for, as the Web site explains, "strategic reasons." Del Colliano's attorneys then got it moved into federal court and are petitioning to bring it back to New York. Clear Channel's new suit makes the same basic arguments as before, but omits several earlier charges, including libel.

Del Colliano contends that the real reason for Clear Channel's lawsuit is to litigate him out of business, and thus suppress critical coverage of the company.

"What radio people want from their trades is for everything to be sweet and nice," says Del Colliano. "That's not what *Inside Radio* is."

— Chris Nolter

JOB HUNT: 10 TIPS

When Jeff Cole, aerospace editor at *The Wall Street Journal*, was killed in a plane crash last year, his legacy included a job-hunting strategy honed as Cole climbed up from a small-town paper. His cousin, Sharyn Obsatz, a reporter at *The Press-Enterprise* in Riverside, California, thought young *CJR* readers — mired in the worst job market in years — might find them useful:

1. Decide where you want to live and work.
2. Order two weeks of back issues of your targeted newspapers.
3. Find a reporter whose stories you like and call to ask the reporter about: job openings, the personality of the person who does the hiring and interviewing, the newspaper's philosophy, how it sees itself beating the competition, and in what areas it hopes to expand or improve coverage.
4. Write a cover letter based on what you learned; explain how you would fit into the newspaper's plans.
5. In the last line of the letter write that you plan to give the editor or recruiter a call.
6. Your past newspaper clippings should be cleanly photocopied and organized with your most powerful work on the top. Add a typewritten line on the top or bottom of each clip summarizing what's great about the article. (Maybe it was written forty-five minutes before deadline, for example.)
7. Call to follow up on your cover letter. If they aren't hiring, ask if you can stop in for a quick chat anyway.
8. Bring a small thank-you gift for the reporter who helped you.
9. After interviews, write a note thanking editors for their time.
10. Keep checking with editors or recruiters to keep your name on their list.

LANGUAGE CORNER

TIME FOR NORMALCY

For a little less than four score and seven years, professors and editors have told writers to avoid the word "normalcy." Coined by Warren G. Harding, they said, and what did he know? Only "normality" would do. But though the great statesman's prescription in his 1920 presidential campaign — "not nostrums, but normalcy" — both popularized the word and drew derision from pedants, it had been around long before he used it. Over the years since, says Merriam-Webster's *Dictionary of English Usage*, "normalcy" has become "recognized as standard by all major dictionaries," and "there is no need to avoid its use."

Its use has hardly been avoided since September 11, 2001; it has pretty much swamped "normality" to express the condition Americans long for and whose loss they grieve. And somehow, despite long indoctrination, "normalcy" these days sounds perfectly (yes) normal.

— Evan Jenkins

A lot more about writing is in Language Corner at *CJR*'s Web site, www.cjr.org.

POLITICS: CAN BLOOMBERG COVER BLOOMBERG?

When the owner of Bloomberg News ran for New York City mayor, the press reported on the billionaire candidate's unorthodox remarks, his daily calls to his ninety-two-year-old mother, and the \$69 million he spent on the campaign.

But Bloomberg News ran tepid summaries of these stories, penned by reporters not on Mike Bloomberg's payroll. Thus, NEW YORK MAYORAL CANDIDATES SPAR AS VOTE NEARS, THE NEW YORK TIMES SAYS; and GIULIANI ENDORSES BLOOMBERG IN NEW YORK CITY RACE, AP SAYS, took the place of firsthand profiles and analysis.

"How could we do enterprise reporting, how could we follow the questions we might raise to their ultimate conclusion without hitting obstacles, because you're barking up the tree that feeds you?" asks Matthew Winkler, editor in chief of Bloomberg News. "We said we won't cover him as a candidate, we won't cover any other candidates. What we will



do is summarize what other media have reported."

On January 1, this short-term ethical dilemma became a way of life. Bloomberg News, which in 2000 assembled a fourteen-member team to cover general New York news, has to figure out how to cover the boss.

Winkler, who has run the news service for twelve years, says that now that there is one mayor, rather than a field of candidates, Bloomberg News will cover him. "We're not going to do the biography of

Michael Bloomberg, where he came from, we just can't do it," Winkler says. "What we can do is report what he said today and here's how it's related to what he said the day before. We'll have to deal with things as they come and we'll do just fine."

He says there is little point in raising "what if" scenarios. But such hypotheticals have been on the minds of some writers, who will cover a mayor who will surely trim staff and programs to balance the books and rebuild lower Manhattan. "Are people going to accept that we're not an agent of Mike Bloomberg?" asks one Bloomberg journalist. "After the election a lot of people made jokes like 'Will you be the new press secretary?' It was bothering me. I began to fear that my credibility was going to go down the tubes. These things really have not been addressed."

Winkler acknowledges the potential for awkward situations. For starters, though, he

insists that the "Bloomberg Way," a detailed style of reporting spelled out in a 359-page manual, one which emphasizes facts over modifiers, and anecdotes over generalizations, will guide the coverage.

In addition, the new mayor, who recused himself from the operations of Bloomberg LP when he declared his candidacy, will not make news decisions. Winkler notes as well that the reporters on city education, politics, crime, and entertainment, drawn from papers such as *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and *Newsday*, stand on their own professional standards.

And just to be sure, Bloomberg News hired Tom Goldstein, dean of the Columbia School of Journalism and former press secretary of Mayor Ed Koch, as arbiter. "I'm going to pepper them with ideas and ultimately recommend whether there should be changes," says Goldstein. "It can work because they have great pride in what they do and it's all out in the open. They don't want to blow it."

The staff, like much of the city, was surprised that Bloomberg won. He had never held office, and he ran as a Republican in a city that is five-to-one Democratic. City hall reporter Henry Goldman, a Bloomberg employee since 1999 who once covered New York for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, has grown tired of the mock post-election "congratulations." He says he is just eager to get back to the business of covering a mayor, and is confident he can do so fairly. "I told Bloomberg a long time ago, 'I'm not related to you. I don't owe you anything except honesty and fairness,'" says Goldman. "I don't feel that I have a conflict."

— Jane Gottlieb

TECHNOLOGY CORNER

THE WAYBACK MACHINE IS WAY COOL

<http://web.archive.org>

If you thought all material on the Internet was short-lived, you haven't yet seen the Wayback Machine. It's an attempt to archive the entire Web, providing a look at the evolution of millions of sites around the world.

Here's how it works: Point your browser at web.archive.org and then in the search box, enter the URL of a site you are interested in. Looking up "nytimes.com," for instance, pulls up links to *The New York Times* site going back to November 12, 1996. As you step through the various dates on which these snapshots have been taken, you can see how the Times site has changed — and with it, design and news conventions. "Cjr.org" brings up the October 31, 1996 front

page, optimized for Netscape version 1.1 (the browser is now up to version 6.2).

For certain major news stories, like September 11 and the 2000 elections, there are special sections that allow you to browse various sites to see what was served up in that moment in time.

The Wayback Machine is part of the Internet Archive, which houses the world's largest library, with more than 100 terabytes of data or 10 billion pages of text. All this data is stored on hundreds of servers in San Francisco. The Archive's sister project, [TelevisionArchive.org](http://www.sree.net), is also worth checking out: among other things, it has video of September 11 events from around the world.

Sreenath Sreenivasan, who teaches new media at Columbia, provides tips for journalists at <http://www.sree.net> and invites suggestions at sree@sree.net.

INTERNATIONAL: AUSTRIA'S TROUBLING TABLOID

With three million readers a day, Austria's *Kronen Zeitung* has perhaps the highest per capita circulation of any newspaper in the world. It gained this preeminence with an almost dadaist collage of stories fanning fears that Vienna is being swamped by undesirable refugees, editorials tinged with anti-Semitic innuendo, and articles trivializing the Holocaust.

The tabloid, also featuring bare-breasted pinups, lowbrow cartoons, and opinions in rhyme, has become required reading at the European Union Monitoring Center on Racism and Xenophobia. Beate Winkler, head of the Vienna-based EU center, terms the *Kronen Zeitung* particularly adept at "emotional mobilization" of the Austrian populace. But she adds, "You need two to tango, both readers and a newspaper that activates them."

Its small-format pages exude anti-Americanism, and this has become even more pronounced since Washington began its war on terrorism. USA STUMBLES INTO SECOND VIETNAM, blared the cover headline this autumn in one-and-a-quarter-inch boldface type. A letter to the editor published on October 13 gloated that a "brave handful" of soldiers under German SS command had easily freed Benito Mussolini from captivity, whereas the U.S., with the "greatest military operation of all time," had yet to capture Osama bin Laden. The paper also runs a regular cartoon about a portly figure named Herr Strudl, who muses about current events as he lounges in a Viennese cafe. This Austrian Joe Six-pack has lately voiced schadenfreude over the challenge facing those Yanks in subduing radical Muslims.

On the surface, all would

● Trotz wilder Terror-Spekulationen um den Horror-Absturz auf New York

Niki Lauda: Warum es ein Unfall war!



appear business as usual at the *Kronen Zeitung*, where noxious political coverage sits alongside gardening tips, recipes for goose stew, horoscopes, and ski reportage. But the paper's management has been in turmoil. Last summer, Hans Dichand, the eighty-year-old publisher and editor-in-chief, rancorously parted ways with his right-hand man, a move that came just weeks after the departure of the lead columnist, Richard Nimmerrichter. According to the tabloid's American correspondent, Nimmerrichter, also an octogenarian, quit after Dichand rejected a column critical of a leader of Vienna's Jewish community. The columnist had previously been assailed by the American Jewish Committee for "minimizing Nazi crimes, and appealing to the cruder prejudices of his mass audience." Included in Nimmerrichter's commentaries was one that made a play on the name of then *New York Times* columnist A.M. Rosenthal, referring to him on second reference as Rosenbaum and on third as Rosenberg.

Now a fierce battle over the paper's fate is under way behind closed doors. What's known is that Dichand, who shares ownership of the paper 50-50 with a German media conglomerate, wants to install his thirty-six-

year-old son, Christoph, as the new editor-in-chief. But this has been rejected by the co-owners, the Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung group. Hans Dichand told staffers last summer that if his son does not gain the top post, "I'll take him by the hand, and we'll leave the building together."

The Dichand accession may be sparking less global speculation than whether Rupert Murdoch is grooming his thirty-year-old son Lachlan as his heir; nonetheless big-time influence is at stake. Any attempt to peer into the paper's future raises the question: What are its owners after — are they committed ideologues or only out to make a buck? Contradictions abound — every Sunday edition includes a copious evangelical message from Vienna's Catholic bishop, while each issue contains two pages of classifieds for prostitutes and phone sex services. (Here racism falls by the wayside — AFRICAN BEAUTY MAKES HOUSE CALLS.) And U.S. correspondent Hans Janitschek is an ex-secretary general of the Socialist International whose terraced Fifth Avenue apartment overlooks Central Park.

Although this often incoherent mélange brings high profits and keeps co-ownership attractive for WAZ, chief executive officer Erich Schumann says he does not always condone the content. "There was a time when the anti-Semitic undertones were louder and we complained," Schumann, who calls WAZ Europe's largest regional newspaper group, would not say if political differences were behind his declaring a right to veto Dichand's chosen successor. In October, the two sides reached a compromise whereby the younger Dichand serves as deputy editor for the foreseeable future, Schumann said. "It will become clear if he has the

capability" to single-handedly take the reins, said Schumann.

Viennese journalists are uncertain how Christoph Dichand might revamp the paper. "I don't know his opinions," says Oskar Bronner, editor of the liberal daily *Standard*. "I don't know if he has one." Christoph Dichand, who in a telephone interview deemed it "slander" to call his paper anti-Semitic, interned at the *New York Post* and the *Daily News* in 1995. "You can't say I'm conservative or liberal," he says. "I'm as independent as my father, and it's my duty to fortify this tradition. I wouldn't change much."

That would mean continuing to both reinforce and shape popular prejudices. The publication was instrumental in the rise of Austria's leading far-right voice, Jörg Haider, and has staunchly defended former president Kurt Waldheim against ostracism for his service in a Wehrmacht unit involved in Nazi crimes. Hans Dichand himself served as a German marine in World War Two. "I did not view the Anschluss negatively," he commented, in a 1996 memoir, of Austria's annexation by Hitler.

In recent years, the paper has staked out more up-to-date terrain by taking a widely embraced stance against nuclear power plants in Austria's vicinity. At the same time, its thoroughly nationalistic tone and hostility to cultural diversity ensures the tabloid its reputation among Viennese critics as "the house organ of the Austrian anti-Enlightenment." Yet even the *Kronen Zeitung* is wary of treading too far. "The paper uses code words," says Oskar Bronner. "One can never prove it is anti-Semitic — they are too careful and clever for that — but they produce a paper anti-Semites read gladly. Dichand has a keen sense for what the people want and has no inhibitions about giving it to them." Will his heir apparent do the same?

—Michael Z. Wise

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Moderated by Michael Mandel, *Business Week*, with Walt Bogdanich, *The New York Times*; John Moscow, Assistant District Attorney, New York; John Moynihan, BERG Associates
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LETTER FROM JERUSALEM

Caught in the Middle



Under attack: Israeli police race to clear a mall after two suicide bombers struck December 1.

BY STEVE MCNALLY

My wife and I moved to Jerusalem from Moscow with our two kids in September 1997. About the time we were packing our bags, three Palestinian suicide bombers blew themselves to bits on Jerusalem's main pedestrian shopping street. Four Israeli bystanders were killed.

We decided on a security strategy that went something like this: no hanging around crowded places or going to the shopping malls; no public transit. I can't remember now what else we decided because the fact is we didn't really implement "the plan" at that time. Four years into peace talks there was a still a sense that the conflict was heading

toward resolution. Relatively speaking, acts of violence were isolated. So we weren't on our guard for long.

My wife's a journalist, too, and, like the flock of other reporters who arrived here around that time, we thought covering Israel and the Palestinians was a pretty good gig. There was always something happening, and if things ever did slow down, a lot of Jerusalem-based reporters just hit the road for Syria, Lebanon, Iran, or any of the neighboring countries that get only a fraction of the attention lavished on Israel.

A bonus in this posting is that you get two countries for the price of one. Israel has the Biblical sites and the Middle Eastern climate, but it's a high-tech, Western oasis in

the desert. After Moscow we felt like we'd landed in Florida. Yet, only minutes away by car lies the West Bank: women in veils, kids on donkeys, the sound of the mosque's call to prayer, the slower pace of a desert people. Each "country" provided a welcome break from the other. As outsiders we moved between these mutually antagonistic worlds with complete ease, welcomed warmly in each as visitors from afar.

As they say, that was then, this is now.

These days the phone rings at midnight, as it did December 1, alerting us to the fact that ten young people had been killed by suicide bombers at Jerusalem's open-air mall. Some were just teens, ripped apart by nails

packed around the dynamite. And these days, friends near Ramallah call in a state of panic, describing how Israeli helicopters are hovering overhead firing missiles into the city center. Their terrified kids are sick with worry.

Even more than before, this beat commands world attention, and it offers reporters unparalleled exposure. But it's a job rife with tension, made worse by the fact that your every effort to deal with this complex and seemingly irresolvable conflict brings close scrutiny from interest groups. And by the fact that it has become a lot more dangerous.

THE NINE-TO-FIVE WAR

When the second intifada erupted in September 2000, we developed a real security plan and this one we implemented rigidly. No malls, no McDonald's, no lingering downtown, no movies, and this time, absolutely no buses. In July I told my kids, ages nine and six, a white lie. I said I'd drive them half an hour each way to day camp because the mini-bus the camp provided didn't have seatbelts. The fact is, I was worried that a bus full of kids might make a tempting target for some extremist.

We started hiding the newspapers and never watched the news in their presence. It worked for a while but they heard stories at school and, as the months passed, that bubble became harder and harder to maintain. The day camp director didn't help much. In his welcoming speech he told the

AP WIDEWORLD/LEIFERS TIRABAS

kids that in case of "terrorist activities" they should run to the arts and crafts teacher, pointing out a grandfatherly-looking man holding paintbrushes. He had a 9 mm pistol bulging from his belt.

Of course, we don't go on family outings to Palestinian towns like Jericho and Ramallah anymore. The one time we made a partial exception to our travel rule, going just beyond the northernmost Jerusalem checkpoint, turned out to be a disaster. While we visited with our Palestinian friends, there was a terror attack back in Jerusalem and the checkpoints were locked down. We pulled up to one just as Palestinian teens began throwing rocks at the Israeli soldiers. In moments there was the bang of tear gas canisters being fired and clouds of smoke were rising a few cars ahead. I could barely choke out my meager words of comfort as I executed a hasty U-turn. The kids were not comforted.

In September we moved out of the center of Jerusalem to an outlying suburb to get away from the increasing number of bombings in the city and to escape the din of the Israeli helicopters and tanks, which were regularly operating just south of us, near Bethlehem. Like most people here, we stay home a lot to keep the war at bay. I use the word "war," carefully, because, while the fighting is localized and happens in relatively short bursts of activity, with more than 700 Palestinians and over 200 Israelis dead in fourteen months, the word fits.

One curious aspect of this war is that it happens so close to home, reporters don't need to travel far to cover it. For example, Bethlehem is only a ten-minute drive from Jerusalem. My friend from Fox News, reporter Jennifer



Reporter down: Bertrand Aguirre after an Israeli soldier shot him.

Griffin, has managed a feat that would be impossible almost anywhere else: to be a war correspondent and a new mother. "It's a nine-to-five war you can cover and still be home for dinner at night," she says. "I've gone out the door with a flak jacket and a breast pump!"

But being able to commute to the "front" hasn't made it any easier for reporters to report on it. Israeli soldiers regularly refuse access to the media when tanks move into Palestinian towns. In October 2000, Israel banned its citizens from going into the Palestinian Territories, which prevented the Israeli cameramen and producers who work for foreign media from doing their jobs. Bureaus were forced to scramble and find Palestinians to fill the gap, and to use their Israeli staffers only inside Israel.

But that expensive arrangement could be doomed, too. The Israeli government press office announced last summer that it would revise its criteria for issuing press cards to Palestinian cameramen, fixers, and interpreters at the beginning of this year. The fear is that Israel will refuse to accredit them, which would, for example, make it impossible

for a translator or cameraman to travel from Ramallah to nearby Jenin or Nablus, because the Israeli army controls the roads between Palestinian cities. The press office says it's looking at the security risk posed by these people, but more than one reporter has told me they have no doubt that the purpose is to reduce firsthand coverage.

THE WEIGHT OF WORDS

I've always been struck by the tone and the volume of propaganda generated by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But fourteen months of fighting has turned the flow of press releases, updates, briefings, and availability sessions into a tidal wave. The amount of spin out there is enough to make anyone dizzy.

Israel would like the press to reflect its view that it's acting in self-defense. It's the Israelis, they argue, who are under siege and are straining to convince the world that they, just like the U.S., are fighting terrorism. In the spin wars, the Israelis' big gun is Ráanan Gissin, media adviser to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. "We're in the building!" announces Gissin's handler as they make the rounds

of Jerusalem Capital Studios, where just about every foreign media outlet has offices. Gissin is shopped around from CNN, to BBC, to Reuters and AP, then Fox, and on and on, offering the Israeli take of the day.

I last saw Gissin in the hallway outside APTN, the TV arm of The Associated Press, in November, when he was asked about Israel's most recent killings of Hamas militants. Israel had stepped up the practice of tracking down and killing "wanted" Palestinians in the last year, sometimes blowing them up with helicopter-launched missiles. The Palestinians say more than sixty men have been killed in this way. Amnesty International condemns these as "extrajudicial executions" that undermine the rule of law, and the U.S. State Department has called them "highly provocative." What journalists call them is a sensitive point for Israel. The government rejects the word "assassination." At various times, it has referred to "initiated actions" or "pre-emptive self-defense strikes." The most common term these days is "targeted killings."

On this day, Gissin said that the army had "intercepted" the militants as they prepared to commit an act of terror in Israel. The journalists weren't buying. One reporter even laughed at the term and said, "Interception" — is that what you're calling it now? "Intercepted," said another, "is that what happens before they die?"

Gissin is just the most visible face in a vast Israeli spin machine. "They're very proactive and professional," says Lee Hockstader *The Washington Post*, "as good any anyone in the U.S." The machine offers up access to high-ranking politicians, military men, and officials. But Hockstader says



For Israel: Ráanan Gissin is the spokesman for Ariel Sharon.

they rarely tell him anything he doesn't already know. Tracy Wilkinson, of the *Los Angeles Times*, says it's hard to get beyond the spin line of the day. "They bombard you with faxes and people to further the same line," she says.

Hockstader knew he'd entered the highest strata of spin in mid-October when Prime Minister Sharon called him on a Saturday evening to explain what he had really meant in that speech on October 4 in which he compared President Bush's "appeasement" of the Arab world to the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's agreements on Czechoslovakia in 1938.

The Palestinian side, meanwhile, wants to be portrayed in the media as the real victim, whose actions stem from being an oppressed and occupied people. The media standard bearers are spokespeople such as Saeb Erekat, chief negotiator, and former legislator Hanan Ashrawi. But they are sometimes undermined by the rest of the Palestinian spin machine, which has fewer resources and less experience than the Israelis. It also tends to exaggerate the circumstances or

the numbers of people killed or hurt in clashes with Israelis.

The classic example was the case of Issam Judeh. He was found dead near his car by the side of the road not far from his village of Uhm Safa, on the West Bank. The Israelis said he'd died in a car accident; the Palestinians said he'd been tortured and killed by Israeli soldiers. Other versions of the story claimed that his eyes had been put out and that he'd been skinned, probably by Jewish settlers. The case gained such a high profile that a team of forensic investigators was sent by Physicians for Human Rights, based in Boston. Their examination of Judeh's injuries led them to conclude that he died when he was thrown from his crashing car.

Some reporters have had experiences that go beyond exaggeration. When Jennifer Griffin of Fox News did a story on Palestinians who collaborate with Israel, Palestinian officials offered her an interview with a convicted collaborator in Gaza's maximum-security prison. After talking to the man for a few minutes, Griffin says, it became clear to her that he had

been coached to say he'd helped Israel find some Palestinian activists, who it then assassinated. She doubted he had the wits to carry out such a deception. Afterwards, Griffin was told that the man had been shot dead trying to break out of jail. She wrestles with the fear that he was killed once he'd served his purpose. "I feel I'm being used, I feel dirty," she says. "There's no real truth here."

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Another kind of pressure on journalists comes from advocacy groups for both sides based in the U.S. and elsewhere. They dissect reports, do "studies" in search of bias, organize letter-writing campaigns, and take out ads to put pressure on reporters here and on their editors in the U.S. Leading the charge for Israel is Boston-based CAMERA (Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America), which has 40,000 members. It publishes a magazine and maintains a Web site where print and broadcast reports are analyzed and where individual reporters are chastised.

One of CAMERA's favorite targets is National Public Radio (NPR), whose coverage it once analyzed by counting the number of "pro-Arab" vs. "pro-Israeli" words. The results, published in a large ad in *The New York Times* in August, accused NPR editors and Jennifer Ludden, the network's Middle East correspondent, of "skewed" and "false" coverage. The ads urged CAMERA members and the public to write to their congressmen, and to complain to local NPR affiliates. In Boston, two donor companies headed by CAMERA members pulled their funding of affiliate WBUR last summer, and urged other corporate donors to do the same.

Reporters tend to bristle when you mention such pressure groups. The mail they get has convinced them that the groups on both sides exist to weigh every word and complain about those that don't support the group's position. If the point was accuracy, Tracy Wilkinson from the *Los Angeles Times* says, she'd welcome the criticism. But it's not, she says; "it's 'we don't like what you wrote because it doesn't further what we believe.'"

Do such tactics have an effect? As you sit down to write a piece they can loom large. For example, Gilo. Do you call it a "settlement"? If so, it is Israeli housing built, in violation of international convention, on West Bank land captured in 1967. Or should it be called, as pro-Israel groups prefer, "the Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo"? That would be saying that it sits on land that's part of the State of Israel. Do you go with "targeted killing" or do you call it an "assassination"? How do you refer to Jerusalem? Israel's supporters insist it's the capital of Israel. Palestinian advocates complain if we don't refer to the Arab side as "occupied territory." "Script writing is torture," Griffin of Fox News says. "Words are part of the battle here, and that does affect the coverage." The choice of words, of course, is often dictated by senior editors or by policy.

"It's just my personal opinion," says Jennifer Ludden of NPR, "but I think the pressure groups are making reporting not as sharp as it should be. Euphemisms and 'he said/she said' reporting dulls the analysis and sharpness of the context, which does a disservice to the audience."

One of the leading media monitors on the Palestinian side is a man named Ali Abunimah. He monitors the media for anti-Arab bias

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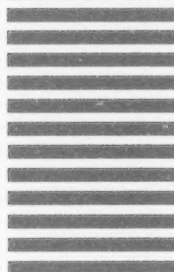
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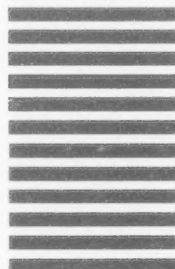
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from his base at the University of Chicago. Though his is a comparatively modest enterprise, he's a prolific letter writer. I got letters complaining about emphasis and vocabulary which reminded me of those voiced by the Pro-Israeli side.

But there was one letter that gave me pause. I can't remember the specific point, but it got me asking myself whether I actually had an unconscious bias that I wasn't aware of: I live on the Israeli side of Jerusalem. I have the Israeli English dailies delivered to my door, the translations of Hebrew newspapers delivered by e-mail, and I listen to the English news in the morning on Kol Israel. We live in fear of Palestinian suicide bombers or gunmen, not in fear of Israeli tank and aerial assaults. I'm conscious of their particular bent, but a lot of the Jewish reality has become my reality. And frankly, when I do live Q&As on radio, I see that this is true of a lot of American journalists too. Their questions to me reflect the fact that they relate more to Israelis, who, like them, are modern middle-class members of a Western consumer society. I try to compensate by mentally changing one hat for the other, but it's only a partial solution.

CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Both sides, of course, do battle for the sympathies of the outside world, especially in the United States. The journalists are in the middle, where it can be dangerous.

On September 11, Palestinian security officers threatened the life of an Associated Press television cameraman in Nablus after he shot video of Palestinians celebrating the attack on New York, and AP chose not to run the footage. When the Foreign



For the Palestinians: Negotiator Saeb Erekat is often quoted.

Press Association complained, the Palestinian Authority promised it wouldn't happen again. But days later the Palestinian police detained several journalists, including some working for foreign news agencies, who were covering a pro-bin Laden demonstration in Gaza. The police confiscated videotape, film, and some camera equipment.

So it's safe to assume that the Palestinian Authority, well used to abusing its own media, will continue to come down on the foreign press on those occasions when it thinks the story is particularly bad for the Palestinian cause.

Perhaps because Israel has a regular army, civilian masters, and a free press, reporters tend to expect higher standards from the Israeli side. But tell that to the French television reporter Bertrand Aguirre of TF-1. Last May Aguirre was covering a clash between Palestinian rock-throwers and Israeli soldiers near Ramallah. He was folding up a tripod once the action died down when an Israeli soldier drove up and jumped out of his jeep, cigarette dangling from his

mouth. The soldier aimed his M-16 in Aguirre's direction and fired a live round from 100 meters away. Aguirre fell to the ground writhing. Several cameramen caught the shooting on video.

He was lucky. The heavy chest plate in his flak jacket stopped the bullet. The force of the impact made a dent that was so hot it burned deeply into his skin. "Nobody was shooting on any side, the demo was all over," Aguirre says. "He had no excuse to open fire." Aguirre accepted assurances from the Israeli Justice Ministry that it was launching a serious investigation. He provided the tapes and the testimony of eyewitnesses. More than four months later Aguirre got a form letter saying the case had been dropped for "lack of evidence." The Committee to Protect Journalists, based in New York City, has documented more than two dozen cases in which journalists, most of them Palestinians, have been either shot or beaten by Israeli security forces while covering the conflict. Reporters without Borders, based in Paris, has placed both Israel and the

Palestinian security forces on its list of "Predators of Press Freedom."

HANGING IN

We know only one journalist who evacuated his family from Israel, and he brought them back three weeks later. The vast majority have simply adjusted to the new reality of life here. Several times a week on our way to school, my kids and I stop on the very spot where, in September, our car was rocked by the blast of a Palestinian suicide bomber blowing himself up less than 100 yards away. He was apparently en route to a crowded vegetable market, but he was just steps away from the entrance to our school when soldiers stopped him and he detonated his bomb. Had the traffic light been green instead of red, we could have been right in front of him.

I think reporters learn to cope with the fears, frustrations, and uncertainties for some pretty obvious reasons. It's a big story that gets more airtime and column-inches than almost any other overseas posting. Landing the job was a good career move; I think that most of us would view asking to get out early as a bad one.

On a good day, you're glad you're here, on top of a dynamic, heart-rending, and uniquely interesting story. On a bad one, you realize you have been lucky not to pay too high a price, and you count the days until your time here ends. ■



Steve McNally is a free-lance journalist. He reports for public radio's Marketplace, for ABC

Radio, and for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

DARTS & . . .

SCOUNDREL TIME

— To wear it, to wave it — among the more fatuous issues that journalists face in the wake of September 11 are those unfurled by the flag. Now it appears that at least one news organization has itself joined the Flag Police. In a McCarthy-esque, anonymously written column of political chatter on Sunday, September 16, the *Citizens' Voice* of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, self-righteously impugned the patriotism of one Dave Janoski, a reporter and editor for the rival *Times Leader*, for “repeatedly stand[ing] silent” when county commissioners pledge allegiance to the flag at meetings “he attends.” Headlined IT’S YOUR FLAG, DAVE, PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE!, the piece neglected to mention that Janoski had attended those meetings as part of an investigation into ties between the county and the *Voice*, ties

that allegedly had included printing-job payments to a reporter who now covers county business for the *Voice*. Three weeks later, on Sunday, October 7, in another anonymous column, the *Voice* reported the “shocking” news that Charlie Herring, a high school history teacher who happens to be “one of [the] biggest supporters” of a school board member seeking reelection, “was seen two weeks ago yesterday seated at a secretary’s desk in the main office, looking at papers during the Pledge of Allegiance”; what’s more, the *Voice* noted indignantly, Herring had “never stood” while faculty and students displayed “their pride and respect for the American Flag.” On October 14, the *Voice* plied its poisonous brand of patriotism still more toxically with a cartoon showing Herring sitting feet up on desk, the lesson on the blackboard reading “Great Flag Burnings of the Sixties,” while two persevering students recite the pledge. The cartoon caption read SOMETHING FISHY IN CRESTWOOD. Indeed.

MISSING

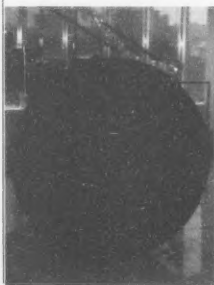
— To mark the 350th anniversary of the city of Norwalk, Connecticut, *The Hour* on Sunday, September 30, carried a special who’s who section profiling scores of local heroes in every walk of civic life, from sports, education, and religion to the arts, medicine, the law, and, of course, business — including, not surprisingly, Stew Leonard, the proprietor and advertiser of the famous food store that bears his name. The fifteen-column-inch story on the “tireless,” “imaginative,” man with the “fertile mind” was as tactful as it was fawning. “At one point several years ago,” *The Hour* reported euphemistically, Leonard “followed a path of advice that led to violation of federal income tax laws. He pleaded guilty and was isolated from his business, his community, and his family for more than four years. A devastating blow, but he survived it by applying the same positive attitude he had always taken in the face of adversity.” What *The Hour*, while mentioning that Leonard had been

“incarcerated,” left out: that he had gone to prison for a \$17.1 million tax fraud in a cash-skimming scheme that helped him and his wife avoid paying \$6.7 million in income taxes — the largest criminal tax fraud in Connecticut history.

— The *New York Times*’s promotional campaign this fall featured Norman Rockwell’s classic painting “Freedom from Fear,” in which all-American mom tucks the kids into bed as all-American dad looks on, newspaper in hand headlining ominous news of war. According to the image published by the *Times*, that paper was the September 12 *New York Times* itself, announcing U.S. ATTACKED . . . HIJACKED JETS DESTROY TWIN TOWERS AND HIT PENTAGON IN DAY OF TERROR. What the *Times*, in a stroke of artfulchutzpa, left out: that the fragmented headline in Rockwell’s 1943 original reads BOMBINGS KILL . . . HORROR HITS, inspired by FDR’s Four Freedoms speech in World War II; and that the paper gripped by the father is the *Bennington Banner* in Vermont — a paper still very much alive.


ARS LONGA, JOURNALISM BREVIS

— The quality of mercy at *USA Today* is not strained; it isn’t there at all. When three high-spirited employees — sportswriter Karen Allen, sports special project editor Denise Tom, and database editor Cheryl Phillips, whose combined years with Gannett total more than two score and ten — found themselves gazing at the costly blue sphere on display in the executive suite of the company’s new \$300 million digs, they could not resist the impulse to leave a “Kilroy was here” message among what looked like other markings in a layer of dust on the ball. Unamused, the company’s royals — after viewing a security-camera videotape of the trio’s prank, after meetings with the culprits, and after receiving their apologies, a letter of remorse, and their offers to pay for fixing the dust-like blue pigment they had so innocently disturbed — handed down an “irreversible” decree worthy of Draco, if not the Marx Brothers: Fired without severance immediately. Significantly, the sculptor herself, Lita Albuquerque, was more offended by the punishment than by the crime. “I think it’s a terrible thing, firing people from a lifetime job for what is essentially graffiti . . . It is certainly reparable for not a lot of money,” Albuquerque told *The Washington Post*’s Lloyd Grove. “This,” she pronounced, “is crazy!” Seems to us that the artist’s perspective is pretty much on the ball.




... LAURELS

INSPECTING THE BAGGAGE


 While the public shuddered and Congress sputtered as the press uncovered one security lapse after another at airport after airport, Knight Ridder newspapers took off in a different direction. Piloted by a first-class team that included Mike McGraw of *The Kansas City Star*, Fredric N. Tulskey, Eric Nalder, and Pete Carey of the *San Jose Mercury News*, and Seth Borenstein of KR's Washington bureau, the investigation traced the history of efforts to improve the country's aviation security system in recent years. They found an unsettling pattern in which commonsensical plans ran into such heavy political turbulence that they never left the ground. Proposals for keeping explosives off planes; for conducting background checks on workers; for setting minimum standards in hiring and training screeners; for requiring foreign carriers to adopt certain measures — at every turn, public safety has been bumped by the VIPs, those Very Influential Priorities convenience and cost, so dear to the hearts of the security companies, the airlines, and the FAA. And, therefore, dear as well to Congress, a dizzying number of whose members have passed through the revolving door between airline industry lobbyists and regulators, are the grateful recipients of hefty contributions to their political campaigns and parties, and as Very Important Politicians enjoy exotic trips hosted by an industry they are supposed to oversee. Meanwhile, actual hijackings, thwarted conspiracies, suspicious crashes, and other warnings have gone tragically unheeded, and legislation for reform tragically delayed. Published only days before the federalization of airport security became the law of the land, the report raised the question of whether the government can be trusted this time to put the public's safety first.

HELP WANTED

 From Ecuador and Egypt, from El Salvador and China, from Pakistan and Poland, the immigrants come, willing to accept the abysmal conditions and substandard pay of the high-risk jobs nobody else wants but surely not bargaining for death. Yet far too commonly, as documented by *Newsday* staff writer Thomas Maier in a disturbing five-part series, death is what they get. Five-fifty-an-hour pickers plunging from eighteen-foot piles of garbage, untrained tree trimmers electrocuted while working near power lines, farm workers felled by dangerous pesticides, meat handlers crushed while loading heavy cartons in slippery, icy water — such were the typical cases examined by Maier. Drawing on translator-aided interviews, police, court, and workers' compensation records, and computer-analyzed documents from various government agencies, Maier discovered in his ten-

month investigation that, of the 4,200 immigrant workers' deaths that occurred around the country from 1994 to 1999, more than 500 occurred in New York State alone, many of them on Long Island, *Newsday's* home. Maier also discovered that hundreds of those needless deaths go uninvestigated, unpunished, and uncompensated by regulatory agencies busily looking the other way. OSHA, for example, is shown to have frequently cited companies for violations that were never followed up, exacted promises from employers that were never kept, and levied laughably low fines. Meanwhile, compensation to which workers' families were entitled has stayed safely beyond reach, protected by the immigrants' difficulties with language, their fear of officialdom, and their ignorance of their rights. Within days of the series' publication, New York Senator Hillary Clinton entered it into the record of the confirmation hearings for OSHA's new head and, together with fellow Senator Charles Schumer, called for a federal inquiry.

THOROUGHbred JOURNALISM

 Ninety-three thousand lucky subscribers of *The Des Moines Register* got an unexpected windfall with their November 6 paper — a four-page insert reported, written, printed, and paid for by Michael Gartner, the paper's former editor, and Gilbert Cranberg, the retired editor of its editorial pages, exposing serious financial problems at the tax-exempt Prairie Meadows racetrack and casino. Bridling at the local press's show of little interest in earlier tips, Gartner and Cranberg had themselves taken up the investigative reins, and, when the *Register* rejected their finished 4,500-word series, they'd put their money on an ad. Thus it was that Iowans came to learn of the inherent conflict in Prairie Meadows's unusual licensing arrangement, by which it is supposed to

“nurture” the state's horse racing industry (at an ever-increasing cost through purses in the millions) and, at the same time, contribute to community charities — an arrangement that, in effect, has led to the subsidization of the horse racing industry by the casino. And thus they came to learn of the bleak future that staying the course could mean for the charities dependent on money from an operation whose losses run close to \$35 million a year; and to learn of possible solutions, including a proposal for separate referendums, in the three Iowa counties that have both tracks and casinos, on whether each should continue. (In a curious coincidence, after the *Register* had accepted the journalists' extraordinary ad but before it was actually published, the paper struggled in with a pair of Prairie Meadows stories, clearly spurred by — but without any nod to — Gartner and Cranberg's work.)

The Darts & Laurels column is written by Gloria Cooper, CJR's deputy executive editor. Nominations may be addressed to her by mail, phone (212-854-1887), or e-mail (gc15@columbia.edu).

Cracks in a Foundation

The Freedom Forum Narrows its Vision

BY RUSS BAKER

At the Arlington, Virginia, headquarters of the Freedom Forum some years back, a visitor couldn't help inquiring about a large abstract painting showing a man and a woman on a horse following a bird in flight. The painting, the visitor was told, was titled "Free Spirit." The visitor expressed surprise, as he recalls it, because the figures in the painting appeared to be on a downward trajectory. A staff member then related an often-told Freedom Forum tale. Upon selling the painting, it seems, the painter had agreed to Freedom Forum's request to re-name the work. The original title: "The Abyss."

Recently, the once high-flying nonprofit found itself, like the bird, plunging headlong into an abyss. From a high of almost \$1.1 billion two

years ago, the foundation's endowment declined to a low near \$700 million by the end of August 2001, losing more than a third of its value (it had risen to \$760 million with the

stock market by November). Chairman and c.e.o. Charles Overby was quick to acknowledge that cuts to the staff of 285 were inevitable, but nevertheless portrayed the crisis as an opportunity to continue on the "way to greatness." While this might adversely impact other Freedom Forum priorities, which include newsroom diversity, First Amendment issues, and international programs, Overby stressed that it would allow the Forum to concentrate on its jewel, the "Newseum." Freedom Forum would double attendance by shutting its old facility and building a new showpiece of journalism on America's museum row in Washington.

Not everyone shared Overby's excitement, especially after he announced that the worst cuts would fall on the most fragile of the Forum's programs: the much-praised efforts to lend succor to foreign journalists struggling in some of the world's toughest arenas. The overseas operation — with offices in Johannesburg, London, Hong Kong, and Buenos Aires — would be shut down in its entirety.

Clearly, something had to give, and the Newseum wasn't going to be it. The foundation had already plunked down \$100 million for the last commercially undeveloped real estate between the White House and the Capitol, and was itching to expand from its limited current Newseum space across the Potomac in Rosslyn, a section of Arlington that is off the prime tourist track.

The decision to further downshift from its role as perhaps the world's leading supporter of journalistic discourse and professional improvement to that of a museum operator stunned many. The narrowing of mission, coupled with remarkable financial losses, brought out long-harbored doubts concerning the foundation's management. "What makes it all the sadder, really," says one veteran of journalism philanthropy, "is that they are so consumed by their excesses that it

tends to minimize what have been some real accomplishments."

THE FOREIGN PROGRAMS BITE THE DUST

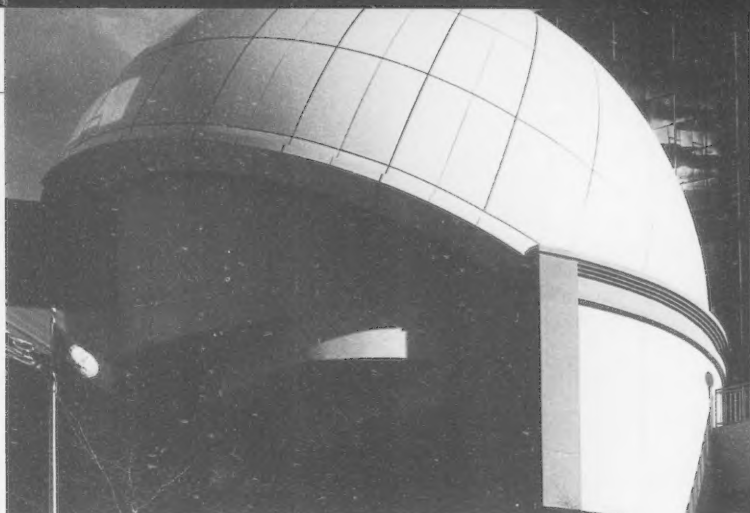
If such well-regarded initiatives as the First Amendment Center and the diversity program were nutritional snacks for American journalists, then for some struggling foreign reporters the international division was a hearty meal.

In recent years, the foundation's European Centre in London became a hub for journalists trying to get the truth out about what was going on in Bosnia, Kosovo, and other parts of the former Yugoslavia; it also sponsored a study on the extent of post-traumatic stress disorder in frontline journalists and provided safety training. Freedom Forum-sponsored events ranged from hosting an unprecedented joint appearance by six presidential candidates in Ghana (thereby promoting not just free speech but democracy), to assembling journalists from nine Asian nations to brainstorm on the challenges of political reporting in countries with fragile press protections.

The Forum's president, Peter Prichard, in an interview at the foundation's offices in Arlington, conceded that "the international programs were great. You're going to countries where journalism's just developing, and people are sitting around talking about how they can avoid being killed, whether they can get enough newsprint, whether they can stay out of jail if they've written an offending article or drawn an offensive cartoon . . ."

In an October e-mail to friends, Arnold Zeitlin, former head of Freedom Forum's Hong Kong office, describes the decision to spend millions on the Newseum as a "choice between bricks, glass and mortar — and people." He also quotes his son, a senior Goldman Sachs managing director, who criticizes the financial decisions at the Forum. "In a more accountable institu-

Charles Overby, chairman



To make way for a bigger Newseum in Washington, the old one in Arlington (above) will close — along with some of the Freedom Forum's other journalistic programs.

tion," Zeitlin concluded, "the senior management would have to resign."

For John Owen, former director of the Forum's European Centre in London, it was a question of seriously misplaced priorities. "The people who run the Freedom Forum, I am ashamed to say, betrayed the commitments they made all over the world to support the cause of free and independent journalism," Owen told the *British Press Gazette Online*. "The irony is that in order to construct a new, expensive, state-of-the-art facility in Washington, we have shut down other buildings and evicted the very people that someday this Newseum will be honouring for their journalism."

As inside critics began questioning management's finances and priorities, the foundation began offering contract buyouts. About 120 employees took them, leaving a staff of 167. Those agreeing to leave were required to sign confidentiality agreements that bar them from criticizing the organization. Departing staff members were not even allowed to keep a copy.

FUN IN FIRST CLASS: THE NEUHARTH FACTOR

In truth, the Freedom Forum has been a walking target since Allen Neuharth retired as chairman of the giant Gannett Company in 1989, took over the helm of its nonprofit offshoot (then known as the Gannett Foundation), and moved it from Rochester, New York, to an office complex in Virginia which included headquarters for the newspaper chain as well as its flagship, *USA Today*. Right from the start, Neuharth thought big. In a few

years he transformed a modest organization, which had mostly sponsored good works in communities where the Gannett Company owned newspapers, into a global promoter of journalistic values. Among its many admired initiatives: adult literacy programs, production of handbooks on "best practices" for journalists, plus conferences and seminars on a broad range of topics for groups such as high school students and female reporters. In 1991, Neuharth sold back the Gannett Company stock whose dividends had undergirded the foundation since its launching in 1935 by Frank Gannett. The sale netted \$650 million for the charity, which agreed to give up the Gannett name (thus "Freedom Forum").

While Neuharth began increasing the endowment toward its late-1990s high of \$1.1 billion, he also continued to indulge a taste for the high life that might have been appropriate for the head of a profitmaking newspaper company but which raised eyebrows in the nonprofit world. "He always said you might as well go first class, it's only little bit more expensive, and is a hell of a lot more fun," recalls John Simpson, the executive editor of the Los Angeles Times Syndicate International, who spent twenty-eight years at Gannett, the final ones as deputy editor of *USA Today*.

In fact, first class was probably a great deal more expensive, both to the organization's coffers and to its reputation. By 1991, critical articles were appearing about lush living at Freedom Forum, and that year the attorney general in New York state, where the group was then registered, started an investigation. By the

time it was over, in 1994, the foundation had been compelled to promise to halt the excessive or imprudent expenditures that might violate its nonprofit status. The list of offenses, both officially catalogued and otherwise, included lavish trips for the brass on first-class air tickets and stays at the world's finest hotels, not to mention the foundation's purchase, as part of its \$15 million office renovation, of a \$1 million art collection through a Florida gallery owned by a friend of Neuharth's. In addition, Neuharth was made to reimburse the Forum \$30,000 for the 2,000 copies of his autobiography, *Confessions of an S.O.B.*, it had bought in small quantities in bookstores around the country to ensure a spot on the *New York Times* list of best-sellers.

Over the years, Neuharth's management role has diminished; today, at age seventy-seven, he is a paid consultant to the foundation, with the title of "senior advisory chairman." But the men he brought in as his successors still accord him costly comforts and honors. After he had retired as Freedom Forum's chairman, the foundation built Neuharth his own office on the roof of its headquarters — even though Neuharth spends the bulk of his time in Cocoa Beach, Florida, where the organization's Florida office, one of the few outposts not scheduled for shuttering, is across the street from his oversized log cabin-motif house.

Freedom Forum has also committed millions of dollars to honoring Neuharth. It hired Michael Gartner, a former NBC News president and Freedom Forum fellow, as well as a Freedom Forum First



Allen Neuharth,
guiding spirit

Amendment Center trustee, to write an authorized Neuharth biography, only to cancel the project last year when Gartner assembled some unpalatable material, including the story of a woman who claimed she was Neuharth's long-ago and ignored out-of-wedlock daughter. *The New York Times* criticized the decision to kill the book in an editorial titled "Free Press, Everywhere but Here."

Other Neuharth testimonials include the Al Neuharth Media Center at his alma mater, the University of South Dakota (Freedom Forum gave about half the \$4.5 million cost of the renovations) and the Allen H. Neuharth Award for Excellence in Journalism (given in 2001 to Jim Lehrer of *The NewsHour*, an honorable journalist who had just been heavily criticized for his slow-pitch softballs to the presidential candidates in the debates). The Allen H. Neuharth Free Spirit Awards (established by the Forum with a \$25 million endowment), hands out \$1 million annually to one or more individuals or organizations "that make major contributions in areas of free press or free speech," some of whom are "spirited" though not necessarily in journalism, including the first blind person to reach the summit of Mount Everest; Chuck Yeager, the test pilot who helped break the sound barrier; and the young Elián González. Now, Neuharth's successor, Overby, the former editor of the Jackson, Mississippi, *Clarion-Ledger*, has gotten into the act. The day after warning the staff to expect deep cuts, he flew to his alma mater, the University of Mississippi, for the naming of the Overby Media Center — funded with \$5 million from the Freedom Forum.

Self-serving generosity has been a hallmark of the Forum under Neuharth and his handpicked successors. More than eight years ago, the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* reported that Neuharth's then-compensation of \$131,000 was more than ten times what other non-c.e.o. chairpersons of similar-sized foundations received, and the overall remuneration rates to brass were three to twenty times those of similar operations. In 1998, the last year for which salary information is available, Neuharth, having retired as foundation chairman, nevertheless received \$316,000 in salary and benefits, and \$187,000 in expense and other allowances. Chairman and c.e.o. Overby's salary and benefits, excluding expense allowance, were \$502,000. Although he declined to provide a current figure, he

is said now to earn closer to \$600,000, a remarkable figure for an executive of a nonprofit who does not live near its headquarters but hundreds of miles away, in horse country outside Nashville — which happens to be the site of the First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University, the Forum's other satellite office that will remain open.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE: 'LIKE A SORE THUMB'

Critics of these excesses have been equally troubled by the enormous losses in the endowment's investment portfolio.

Many nonprofit foundations suffered during the past two years as part of the general economic downturn, a few incurring far greater hits, but Freedom Forum's losses are definitely on the higher end of the damage curve, according to John Griswold, senior vice president of the Commonfund Institute, a Connecticut-based organization that studies investing by educational endowments and other nonprofits.

Freedom Forum's officials had put more than 90 percent of its investments into Standard & Poor's Index Funds, Prichard explained in a letter to CJR, a strategy which he has argued allowed the endowment to balloon so much in the first place (and inspired executives to dream of a grander Newseum). But Griswold says that the foundation was ill-served by putting itself so heavily into these funds, which have in recent years strongly reflected the boom-and-bust fortunes of technology companies, and in concentrating so heavily on stocks in general. "For a billion-dollar fund, putting it all in equities was a real roll of the dice, particularly when there were so many warnings in the press," says Griswold. "Thoughtful people acting as prudent men would have long since diversified. And most people did. So these people do stand out like a sore thumb." By comparison, the Miami-based Knight Foundation, another offshoot of a journalism dynasty, doubled in size during the last decade, even without crediting a \$200 million infusion from the estate of James L. Knight. Slightly smaller than Freedom a decade ago, Knight is now more than two and a half times larger. There are fundamental differences between the two — while Knight has remained a grant-making entity, Freedom Forum converted itself to an operating one (with greater administrative costs)

some years back; still, even when these factors are taken into account, and even when Freedom Forum's operating expenses are discounted, the organization still lost more than 20 percent of its investment value while most others were down only in the low single digits.

"We were taking some advice from experts, advice that was doing very well for some years, but that suddenly turned sour," says a Forum trustee, Paul Simon, the former U.S. senator, who is now director of the Public Policy Institute of Southern Illinois University. "We have had professional advice, but it turned out not to be any better than asking a guy walking down the street."

According to president Prichard, the Forum's investments are managed by "seven or eight" major brokerage houses, but the ambitious growth strategy, largely intended to fund the new Newseum, was directed by the foundation's finance committee, chaired by Malcolm Kirschenbaum, a lawyer and real-estate developer in Cocoa Beach, Florida, which is Neuharth's hometown. Kirschenbaum represented *Florida Today* in the 1970s, when Overby edited it, and he has known Neuharth since the 1960s.

As a result of investment reversals and heavy spending (including millions of dollars Freedom Forum poured into a joint twenty-four-hour public affairs cable venture with D.C.'s public television station WETA, only to pull the plug when it became apparent that cable operators would not carry it), the foundation has been retrenching on nearly everything but the Newseum for more than a year.

In early 2000, the Forum closed its San Francisco-based West Coast office, anchor of a diversity-oriented internship program, which has been transferred to Nashville. Around the same time it closed its Media Studies Center, which had once been the nation's leading independent media think-tank, operating first from Columbia University and later from the top floor of I.M. Pei's showcase, the former IBM building in midtown Manhattan. Among other things, the center relied on its location at the hub of the media world to draw powerful and controversial practitioners alike to the table for discussion, and supported one-year fellowships that resulted in more than 100 books. Freedom Forum started phasing the program out several years ago. The New York office, which continued to be a satellite of the First Amendment Center, was shut altogether in November.

Recently, the foundation's decision to

buy pricey real estate on the mall in Washington, and the fancy plans it has for the spot, have drawn attention. When completed in 2005, the new Newseum will have, besides the main attraction and the foundation's offices, income-generating tenants, including shops, a restaurant and 100 housing units. The museum deal, completed in late 2000, essentially sealed the fate of the foreign programs and guaranteed cuts throughout the organization. With the foundation committed to spending the \$100 million, and with its investments plummeting, there was no way out. The price includes \$75 million for the land itself and another \$25 million to a favored priority of Mayor Anthony Williams, a fund for low- and middle-income housing. This was a very large sum for any organization and, in the opinion of some Washingtonians, considerably more than even such a prime location was worth — double its value by some estimates. Overby was so eager to grab the spot, where a D.C. office building was located, that he convinced the district to forgo the usually time-consuming process of putting land out for bid, and made an unsolicited offer. The amount, which constitutes the largest real estate deal ever involving city property, caused Freedom Forum staff members to gasp when they first heard it, according to an account in *The Washington Times*. Add to that several hundred million in construction and outfitting costs, and the total could top half a billion dollars even before the museum opens. "We said originally we thought the whole project would cost \$250 million," said Prichard. "I think it will probably cost somewhat more than that, but we don't know yet. We're actually in the process of trying to figure all that out now."

'EVERYONE LOOKS WAY TOO GLEEFUL'

Regardless of the final bill, Freedom Forum leadership is convinced they have made the right choice in dumping the international division in favor of the Newseum. "We made a judgment that we can do more programs in the Newseum that are more effective and reach more people than we can do in any other way," says Prichard. This extended the philosophical shift that began when the first Newseum opened in 1997. The Freedom Forum, as Overby put it in the annual report that year, would aim primarily not at small groups of journalists but at the public. "Essentially, we went

from wholesaling to retailing," he wrote, "from preaching to the choir to preaching to the entire congregation."

One can get an inkling of what they intend to achieve by visiting the existing space. The Newseum, even in cramped quarters, is a triumph of sizzle. It creatively captures the events, figures, and artifacts of journalism in its finest and darkest hours. It features a staggering array of mementos, from a copy of Emile Zola's *J'Accuse* in the notorious Dreyfus case to Bob Woodward's notes from Watergate, plus constant screenings of short films on the Pulitzer Prizes, on how Hollywood portrays the press, on the *Power of the Image* (narrated by Walter Cronkite), and on the First Amendment. Video games offer visitors the chance to try their hand at selecting an editorial lineup and making ethical choices; schoolchildren can go on a mock set and make a video of themselves anchoring a newscast or play a game show, "News Mania." One wall features a one-hundred-and-twenty-six-foot-long panel of video monitors that receive constant news feeds, believed to be the world's largest such display. Outside, in Freedom Park, is a memorial to reporters and photographers killed in action, remnants of the Berlin Wall and a real East German watchtower, original cobblestones from the Warsaw Ghetto, a toppled, headless Lenin statue, plus a casting of the door of the cell in which Martin Luther King, Jr. was held in Birmingham. Even Ben Bradlee, the crusty former *Washington Post* editor who is not known to have many kind things to say about Neuharth or Gannett's *USA Today*, is a fan of the Newseum, which he has visited with his grandchildren.

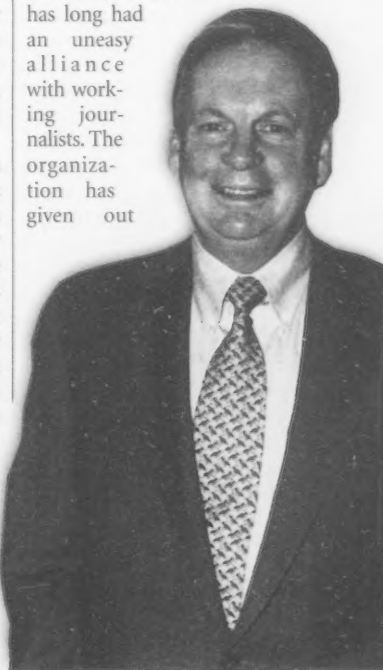
Yet the insistence of the foundation's leadership that the Newseum represents the logical culmination of the Forum's mission, as catchily formulated by Neuharth, to promote "Free Press, Free Speech, Free Spirit," rings a bit hollow. As *The New York Times* wrote of Neuharth in an editorial earlier this year, "For better or worse, he is credited with hastening the corporate consolidation of the newspaper business and with pushing print journalism to cater to a TV generation with a new look that favors graphics, color, and shorter articles." Indeed, the Newseum appears to reflect some of his propensity for "happy news," including simulated newsrooms where everyone looks way too gleeful.

Not unreasonably, foundation offi-

cials expect the new Newseum on the Mall to double annual visitorship to one million (the Rosslyn building is scheduled to be shut in March 2002 as a money-saving device, meaning three years with no Newseum). But is a bigger and better Newseum really the best way to help journalism worldwide? The museum's executive director, Joe Urschel, a former *USA Today* reporter, notes that 18 to 20 percent of Newseum visitors report that their visit left them with a significantly enhanced appreciation of the First Amendment — a nice but hardly awe-inspiring statistic.

On one level, the museum is an important force for public understanding of the news business; on the other, it seems to represent an effort to redefine news as an extension of pop culture — the central film segment of each visit emphasizes that news is *everything*, it's *now*, it's *exciting*, it's *dangerous*, it's *glamorous*, it's the *big and small of life* (and death), and it's *evolving*. What's largely missing is an attempt to inculcate deeper values, explore the most controversial sides of the business, and capture the essential, trouble-making raffishness of the craft. Given its genetic origins, one wonders if the Newseum can ever provide a platform for practitioners of let-the-chips-fall-where-they-may investigative and enterprise journalism in an increasingly corporate-minded, bottom-line industry run by the likes of Gannett.

Freedom Forum has long had an uneasy alliance with working journalists. The organization has given out



Peter Pritchard, president

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This program, with the assistance of the National Cancer Institute, is underwritten by a grant from Pfizer, Inc.

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hundreds of generous fellowships, most of which ask little in return and serve as comfortable platforms from which to write books, launch publications, or unwind a bit from the rigors of the daily routine. And editors and reporters who enjoy the fine food and drink at the foundation's seminars sometimes refer, off the record, to the "Feed 'em Forum."

PUTTING THE NEWSEUM 'WHERE THE FISH ARE'

Chairman Overby insists the foundation remains committed to both its diversity effort, which is widely credited with making it possible for smaller papers to hire and retain journalists of color in an effort to reverse a dramatic underrepresentation in the field, and its well-regarded Vanderbilt University-based First Amendment Center under John Seigenthaler, former editor of *The Tennessean* and founding editorial director of *USA Today*. But the drive toward Pennsylvania Avenue and a mass audience — Overby calls it "fishing where the fish are" — is the culmination of years of gradual withdrawal from the broader journalistic community.

And it would take a lot to convince many observers that the international programs, which cost \$7 million in 2000 (the last year for which budgets have been released), could not somehow have been spared. Many of the costs attributed to those programs had little to do with the fairly minimal expenses of bringing developing-world journalists together or providing them with a roof and some tools. Clearly, overspending on luxuries made up a fair amount of the cost. Offices opened around the world were in prime real estate with fine furnishings and sweeping views. A classic anecdote described briefly some years back by *The Washingtonian* and independently confirmed by CJR is telling: In 1992 the Freedom Forum sponsored a conference for publishers in the newly post-Communist Russia. The event, to which were invited not only Russians but American luminaries such as Katharine Graham and Tom Winship, was booked into a Scandinavian-run hotel in St. Petersburg with rooms running approximately \$350 a night, where virtually all the food was imported. When Neuharth arrived like a potentate on his private plane, funded by the Freedom Forum, customs and immigration officials raced out to meet him on the tarmac. The topper was surely when

Neuharth summoned a Freedom Forum vice president to his hotel room, shoved a roll of toilet tissue under her nose, and demanded, "Do you call this toilet paper?" — after which he dispatched his plane to Helsinki, whence it returned with a softer alternative.

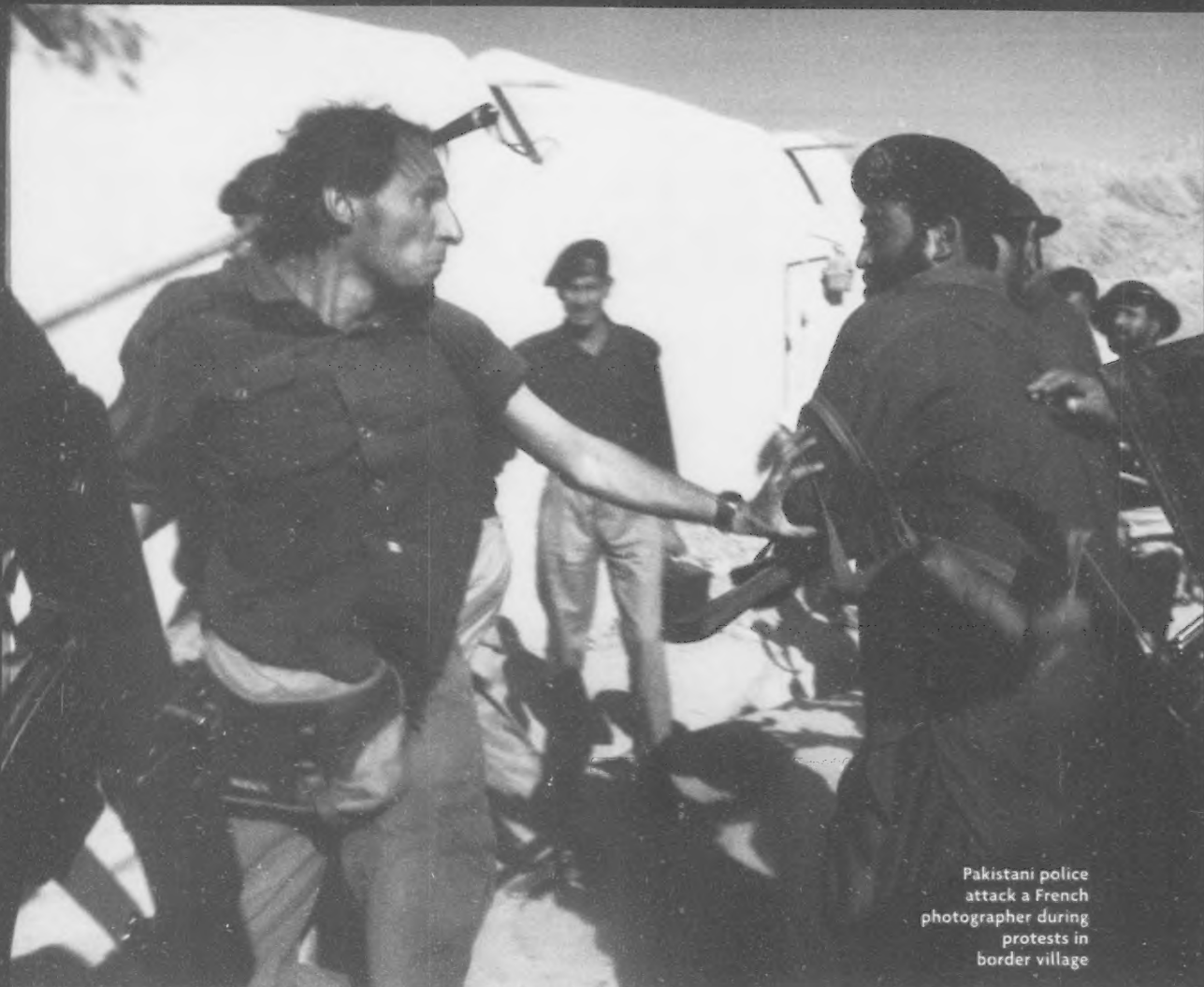
In recent years Neuharth has traveled on behalf of the foundation to places such as Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai, and Tokyo, often accompanied by a small platoon out of Rosslyn. At the Ritz Carlton in Shanghai, the foundation paid for the presidential suite so Neuharth could entertain local journalists, and a private room for him even though he did not stay in the room overnight. Perhaps all this foreign travel is behind Neuharth's heightened appreciation for international coverage, which grew markedly after he left Gannett. "He did not evince a lot of interest in foreign news when he was coming up," says Bradlee. Now, he is said to be upset about the plan to terminate the international division, which sources say he had assured one division executive would survive.

As for Overby, the current c.e.o., he declined to address the frequent charges that "gold-plated" spending habits had much to do with the center's problems. "I have found that there are three things that everybody knows how to run," he said. "They know how to edit a newspaper, they know how to coach a football team, and they know how to run a foundation."

In the end, most visitors will undoubtedly appreciate the new Newseum. Kids will surely love, as Prichard pointed out, the chance to sit in the very chair in which the first woman was electrocuted, a 1928 milestone surreptitiously photographed by the New York *Daily News* photographer who smuggled a camera strapped to his leg into Sing Sing prison. Older viewers will surely gaze with awe upon pages from the Gutenberg Bible, symbolic of the printing technology that first made possible the widespread distribution of news and other information.

Yet as entertaining and instructive as those spectacles undeniably will be, they have little to do with the day-to-day challenges faced by most journalists — practitioners of a profession whose raison d'être is getting at the truth, regardless of how difficult that might be and whom it might disturb. That was something Freedom Forum, excesses at the helm notwithstanding, once seemed dedicated to supporting. ■

Russ Baker is a contributing editor to CJR.



Pakistani police
attack a French
photographer during
protests in
border village

A TIME OF TESTING: SPECIAL REPORT

Since September 11, a changing world has been testing journalists — testing their talents, their courage, their fairness, their persistence, their creativity, their reach.

Covering the war is one such test. Afghanistan has proved to be an assignment of great opportunity and great danger, with eight journalists already killed as we go to press. For others, the war has proved a frustrating exercise far from the fighting, with access to soldiers and information limited as never before.

News has reemerged, and readers and viewers want more. On the home front, editors and reporters have struggled to find valuable and creative ways of covering the war on terrorism and its effects. And international news is back — people want to understand this world — and many journalists are asking if this is a long-term revival.

This special report, *Afghanistan and Beyond*, looks at a seminal moment for journalism at the front in Afghanistan, in Washington, around the nation, and around the world, about covering another battleground. The report begins on the next page.

PAULA BRONSTEIN/GETTY IMAGES

ACCESS DENIED

Pentagon's War Reporting Rules Are Toughest Ever

BY NEIL HICKEY

Journalists have been denied access to American troops in the field in Afghanistan to a greater degree than in any previous war involving U.S. military forces. Bush administration policy has kept reporters from combat units in a fashion unimagined in Vietnam, and one that's more restrictive even than the burdensome constraints on media in the Persian Gulf.

And at the Pentagon in Washington, where massive quantities of battle reports arrived hourly, Defense Department spokespersons spoonfed correspondents a calibrated daily ration of news about the military operations that has left those journalists frustrated and mutinous.

Those conclusions arise from interviews with more than a score of foreign editors, Pentagon correspondents, Washington bureau chiefs, top news executives, media critics, and others conducted from early October through mid-December. Their grievances have two strands. First, journalists in the Afghanistan theater did not have reasonable access to land and sea bases from which air attacks were launched on Taliban positions. Thus: no press presence on long-range bombing runs, and little or no opportunity to interview pilots upon their return from their missions. Correspondents have had no expectation of accompanying commando units into Afghanistan — an acceptable restraint, since journalists are not parachute- or combat-trained. But neither have they been permitted to interview those Special Operations forces after the fact to confirm, independently, the success or failure of missions and the extent of casualties. The aircraft carrier *Kitty Hawk* — the launch base for many of those commando raids — was off limits. Journalists had no independent contact with such units as the 10th Mountain Division while it was poised in Uzbekistan awaiting action, nor with the Ma-



rine Expeditionary Units just before they entered Afghanistan from ships in the Arabian Sea in late November, nor with other American forces in Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Oman. Also out of bounds to the press: the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, from which long-range bombing missions originated. In the whole region, there has been no central, allied-operated information facility — comparable to the Joint Information Bureau (JIB) in Saudi Arabia during the gulf war — to which journalists could appeal for facts, guidance, and confirmation. It wasn't until November 25 that, for the first time during the war, the Pentagon organized a press pool to accompany, under restrictions, more than 1,000 marines landing in southern Afghanistan near Kandahar; in mid-December it assigned public affairs officers to aid the press at other sites.

"Imagine this," said Sandy Johnson, the Associated Press bureau chief in Washington, speaking in November. "There is a war being fought by Americans and we're not there to chronicle it. We have access to the Northern Alliance, we have access to the Taliban, we have practically zero access to American forces in the theater." Journalists, she is sure, got shorter shrift in Afghanistan than they ever did in the Persian Gulf.

CONTROLLING THE FLOW

The second strand of press grievance centers on the Pentagon, where information is funneled to journalists in briefings by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and a pair of upper-echelon military officers: the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Richard B. Myers, and Rear Admiral John Stufflebeem.

AP WIDEWORLD/JOE MARGUETTE

General Tommy Franks, commander of U.S. forces, has been relatively invisible, in sharp contrast to General Norman Schwarzkopf, who became a television star and folk hero for his detailed press briefings in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, during the gulf war. Victoria Clarke, the Defense Department chief spokesperson, gets mostly good marks from Pentagon reporters for accessibility and for her efforts to find answers to their questions. But — as the correspondents point out — the stingy flow of information derives from policy makers higher than she in the administration. Clarke is the only Pentagon spokesperson in memory who has had no serious experience as a working journalist. Says Clark Hoyt, Washington editor for the thirty-two Knight Ridder newspapers: "I think she's trying hard to do a professional job. She sometimes feels we're not grateful enough for the bit of access we've gotten, but I don't think you can expect gratitude for feeling as shut out as the press feels right now."

In the aftermath of September 11, the Pentagon briefly increased its press conferences from two a week to five, then in early October told reporters it was returning to its "normal" twice-weekly schedule. The press corps protested vigorously, demanding to know what was normal about bombing Afghanistan. The Pentagon relented. ("Let's hear it for the essential daily briefing," Rumsfeld jibed, "however hollow and empty it might be.")

The Pentagon press is, in fact, pleased to have regular session with Rumsfeld, who — although he is masterly at parrying unwelcome questions — at least gives reporters steady access to a cabinet official. Rumsfeld is the Pentagon's most expert briefer, says Charles Lewis, Washington bureau chief for the Hearst newspapers, "not necessarily in terms of imparting information, but in giving us a chance to see the song and dance in public. That's valuable." At one recent briefing, a reporter asked Rumsfeld if he would describe how Taliban leaders were being flushed from their hideouts. "I certainly can, and I'm not inclined to," Rumsfeld answered.

An unstated reason for the Pentagon's determination to control the flow of news from the front is a concern that images and descriptions of civilian bomb casualties — people already the victims of famine, poverty, drought, oppression, and brutality — would erode



Marines tack up a U.S. flag at a base near Kandahar

public support in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world.

On October 19, a *Washington Post* article by Pentagon correspondents Tom Ricks and Vernon Loeb reported that U.S. Special Forces already were operating in Afghanistan, and that the ground phase of the war was thus under way. The next day, a Pentagon briefer conducted a show-and-tell with video images — shot by the military's own combat film teams — of Army paratroopers boarding a plane at an undisclosed location; and night-vision footage of commandos parachuting into Afghanistan. Days later, Rumsfeld began a briefing with a dour warning — triggered, it appeared, by the *Post* article — that any officials in the Pentagon who leaked tactical military information about ongoing operations were breaking the law. His admonition clearly was intended to tighten his office's chokehold on how the war is reported, and to discourage any backchannel contact with officials in the know.

ABUSING GROUND RULES

That same week, in an article headlined "Military Is Putting Heavier Limits on Reporters' Access," *The New York Times* wrote that the media were being frozen out of military operations far more than in any recent conflict — NATO's war against Yugoslavia, the American invasion of Haiti, the U.S. intervention in Somalia.

Restrictions imposed on the press in Grenada in 1983 soured many journalists on the military, leading to the creation of

press pools for the Panama incursion of 1989, and the more onerous pooling in the Persian Gulf. After those experiences, the Pentagon and Washington bureau chiefs of TV and print news organizations put their heads together and thrashed out a set of principles for wartime news coverage that were promulgated in 1992. In Afghanistan, the guidelines are very much on the back burner, a victim of the unique aspects — military, logistical, geographical — of the war.

The most egregious single offense against the press's capacity to report the war happened near Kandahar on December 5. When a stray B-52 bomb killed three soldiers and wounded nineteen others, commanders in the field confined the press pool reporters and photographers to a warehouse, thus preventing them from approaching the victims, the rescuers, and the medics. "Outrageous," declared the AP's Johnson. "A gross abuse of the ground rules for the press pool," said Jill Abramson, Washington bureau chief of *The New York Times*. A Pentagon spokesman acknowledged that "in the heat of battle," the Marine commanders on the ground had erred in restraining journalists from covering a major story — Americans killed and wounded by friendly fire.

That incident finally brought the promise of a thaw in the Pentagon-versus-press cold war. "We owe you an apology," Victoria Clarke wrote in a letter to Washington bureau chiefs. "The last several days have revealed severe shortcomings in our preparedness to support news organizations in their efforts to cover U.S. military operations in Afghanistan." The Pentagon was establishing several public information facilities inside Afghanistan, she said, that would help provide "maximum media coverage with minimal delay and hassle." Whether those mea culpas and good intentions would translate into significant improvements remained to be seen. But on December 20, three photojournalists working for U.S. news outlets near Tora Bora were detained by Afghan forces, apparently at the request of U.S. forces. Their images of American troops were seized, although the presence of U.S. troops in the area had been openly discussed by the Pentagon, according to *The New York Times*.

The mood among Defense Department correspondents, according to National Public Radio's man at the Pentagon, Tom Gjelten, is "unquestionably

Q&A Victoria Clarke



AP/WIDEWORLD/DOUG MILLS

Victoria Clarke, assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, is the Pentagon's chief spokesperson. She spoke with Neil Hickey on December 12. Excerpts from that conversation follow.

As you know, there's been a great deal of dissatisfaction among the press about restrictions on their access to military forces in Afghanistan.

We said from the very beginning, and it's been borne out, that this is a very unconventional war. We are up against people who don't have armies and navies and air forces. We encouraged journalists to disabuse themselves of any notions that this would be like any previous conflicts — the Persian Gulf, for example, where you saw thousands of troops coursing across the desert. Also: given the fact that there was going to be a special, unique, and important role for Special Forces, there would be some things that nobody could or should ever see.

In a December 6 letter to Washington bureau chiefs — after correspondents were physically restrained from approaching the friendly-fire casualties near Kandahar — you apologized for "severe shortcomings" in handling the press in the region, and said you'd be sending to Afghanistan more experienced public affairs officers who could better handle the challenges. Have you done it?

It's done. There are public affairs officials right now at Bagram Airfield, Mazar-i-Sharif, and with the marines at Rhino [near Kandahar], the forward operating base. At Rhino, given its location and the circumstances, a pool arrangement is still appropriate. But at the other two, reporters can do unilateral coverage. The primary desire is to use pools as seldom as possible, to move to unilateral coverage as quickly as possible.

You've acknowledged that "mistakes were made" in meeting the media's needs. What mistakes have you personally made?

I don't think I have communicated clearly enough down the line to people on the ground in Afghanistan and elsewhere what our intent is and what our expectations are in terms of handling the media.

One of the guidelines agreed to by the Pentagon and the press in 1992 after the gulf war is that "open and independent reporting will be the principal means of coverage of U.S. military operations." Media people complain that for practically the whole Afghan war, there was no open and independent reporting. Your response?

Two things. First: Until recently, all we had on the ground were Special Forces in small numbers. Their visibility would not only have done harm to their operational intent, it probably would have put their

lives at risk. Second: We now have greater numbers of conventional troops on the ground. The media went in with the first wave of marines. There were literally just a handful of seats [available] on that first wave going into Afghanistan. One bureau chief was quite upset, and said that was unacceptable, and that it should have been all or nothing. We should have let everybody in. I said, Well okay, here's your choice. If you had demanded that anybody who wanted to go could go, then nobody could have gone. And there would have been no coverage of the marines going into Afghanistan.

Media people on the scene also have complained about lack of access to pilots before and after their missions.

There have been extensive interviews done with pilots. Literally several dozen correspondents have been up in the AWACs — the combat air patrols. Just today, we've been doing interviews with people who were in the search and rescue operation of the B-1 bomber [that crashed on take-off near Diego Garcia]. Two or three days ago, we conducted interviews with the Special Forces who were injured as a result of the friendly fire. We have offered up and conducted interviews with people who were with the 10th Mountain Division in a region that we don't disclose because of host-country sensitivities. So I just don't think that's valid.

ACCESS DENIED

continued from 27

one of great dissatisfaction." He objects to the way Rumsfeld and his staff have "put a lid" on reporters' customary easy access to the generals and admirals who populate the building. "There's been a kind of chilling atmosphere here," he says. "Senior military officers have got the idea they're not supposed to talk to reporters." One recent day, while walk-

ing the Pentagon corridors, he encountered a general who'd been a source for him in the past. As they strolled, chatting, the general glanced over his shoulder and said: "I just hope nobody sees me talking to you." Says Gjelten: "That's the atmosphere now." CNN's man at the Pentagon, Jamie McIntyre, on *The Newshour with Jim Lehrer*, said that Rumsfeld "issued an edict essentially telling everybody not to talk about anything. So even the flow of routine information has been shut down." ABC's Washington bu-

reau chief, Robin Sproul, concurs that the Pentagon is "very much controlling access" to military experts lower on the chain of command who traditionally have been fruitful sources. But, she hastens to append, as regards the topmost echelon: "This has been the most accessible Pentagon I've ever experienced, and I've been a bureau chief in Washington for almost twenty years."

The Pentagon has invoked so-called "host country sensitivity" as the reason for denying journalists access to U.S.



Will reporters ever be allowed on the *Kitty Hawk*, the aircraft carrier, where many commando operations have originated?

It depends on what kinds of activities are being conducted off the *Kitty Hawk*. The nature of activities that were emanating from the *Kitty Hawk* were not ones that were suitable for any coverage.

What are your feelings about the general quality and quantity of the reporting from Afghanistan?

If you actually look at the sheer volume of coverage of the war since October 7, which was the first day of the air strike in Afghanistan, I have been told — and don't take my word for this — that it was extraordinary, and beyond what has been done in the same amount of time in any previous conflict. So those elements of the war that could be covered were getting extensive coverage. The piece of it to which there was very little access — and that will probably be true going forward — is the covert activities, which is perfectly reasonable. We brought back combat camera footage of the actual October 19 raid, which correspondents in this hallway told me was unheard of, had never been done before, and which was an extraordinary insight into some of the more unconventional aspects of the war.

Has an edict gone out to senior military officials in the Pentagon that they shouldn't talk to the press, outside of certain tightly approved channels?

Just the opposite. We have encouraged, and I think we have produced, greater facilitation of communications and interviews and coordination with all sorts of people in the building. I've been told we are the only defense agency in the world in which the media are actually housed. There are thirty or forty of them who come to work here every day. They roam freely throughout the building to any one of the 23,000 people they want to see and talk to and interview. [Still], prior to Secretary Rumsfeld being here, there was an extraordinary amount and level of leaking, and extensive backgrounding of information that probably was not appropriate to be shared. So I think there was a bit of culture shock.

At one point, you wanted to cut back the briefings from five a week to two.

It was the bureau chiefs who insisted — insisted — that we do daily briefings. We said, you know, folks, this is a very unconventional war, there will be very erratic, sporadic levels of activity. Sometimes we'll be able to talk about things, sometimes we won't. So isn't it more important, from a news judgment point of view, to brief on a regular basis — not just to brief for the sake of briefing. They said, "No, no, no. Brief every single day, if not more." And so now, not only do we brief five days a week from the briefing room, I also do what I call a 9 A.M. "gaggle" here in my office. Any media that are interested can get the early morning take on information we have from the night before.

Any generalizations about the quality of the press corps, both at the Pentagon and in Afghanistan?

Media executives aren't really sure who's responsible for keeping the press at arm's length from U.S. forces in Islamic countries. CNN's top executive for news, Eason Jordan, says that in Uzbekistan, U.S. officials blame it on the Uzbeks. "You go to the Uzbeks," says Jordan, "and they say, 'Gee, we're all for it, but the U.S. is blocking it.'" Whom does he believe? "I don't know. It doesn't matter. There's nothing I can do to change it."

In mid-September, President Bush declared that his administration "will

Ninety-nine percent of the correspondents who cover this building on a regular basis are phenomenal. They are more responsible and more sensitive to operational security and the safety of the men and women in uniform than just about anybody you can find. But when you start to get distant from that — to bureau chiefs, or corporate heads — they don't have much knowledge about this. At a meeting, a bureau chief actually said, in front of all the colleagues there: "Well, if you're not going to let us go along [on commando raids], then here's what you need to do. You need to tell us when there's going to be covert activity, and tell us when it's going to start and when it's going to end. And then we can report on it after the fact."

What did you say to that?

I didn't say anything.

In other words, that was an idiotic request.

I wouldn't care to characterize it. There was stunned silence in the room. I just use this to illustrate my point.

A final thought?

At a seminar with journalists recently, I said: "If you loved everything we [at the Pentagon] were doing, I probably wouldn't be doing a good job. If I loved everything you were doing, you probably wouldn't be doing a very good job." We should accept the fact that some healthy tension is a good thing. Providing for the common defense is in the Preamble to the Constitution, and the rights of the press are in the First Amendment. Those two things are so important that it is probably valuable that there is this healthy tension. If we were all happy, we probably would be living in the Soviet Union.

troops in Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan, for example — countries which may have political, diplomatic, and cultural reasons for playing down their cooperation with western forces. AP's Johnson scoffs: "The most isolated and closed society in the world is Saudi Arabia, and during the gulf war our politicians persuaded that country to allow literally hundreds of American and other western journalists to report from there. That has not happened in this theater."

not talk about any plans we may or may not have. We will not jeopardize in any way, shape, or form, anybody who wears the uniform of the United States." But journalists covering the Afghanistan story, both at the front and in Washington, are unanimous that any reporting that might endanger U.S. troops during an ongoing operation ought not be published or aired. They fully understand that commando activity, by its nature, must be clandestine. But a few Pentagon reporters I talked to felt that legitimate

ACCESS DENIED: Two differing agendas

concerns about operational security were being used as an excuse for not being more forthcoming, and for keeping journalists and the troops apart.

At one level, it's foolishly counterproductive to keep the press from the troops in wartime, says George Wilson, the defense columnist for *National Journal*, and for twenty-three years the military affairs correspondent for *The Washington Post*. Whenever a military unit is hospitable to a reporter, Wilson says, "you create another Ernie Pyle because reporters always fall in love with the troops when they see how hard they work." Young officers in the field love to have their soldiers get some ink for their exploits.

In some zones, even if access were permitted, the result wouldn't be worth the effort. Diego Garcia, where B-52 missions originate, is 2,500 miles from Afghanistan. "It's a hell of a trip just to shoot tape of landings and take-offs," says John Stack, Fox News Channel's vice-president of newsgathering, "because that's all you're going to get."

Leonard Downie, executive editor of *The Washington Post*, has pointed out to Victoria Clarke that any bad news from the front that isn't reported in a timely fashion can create unnecessary suspicions of a cover-up. In Grenada in 1983, for example, reports of a massacre by American troops gained currency in the period before reporters were allowed on the island. The story was false, but, Downie remembers, "it has haunted the reputation of the U.S. military ever since." Clarke insisted to Downie that the Pentagon takes pains to convey bad news as quickly as possible.

That may not have been the case in the Pentagon briefers' handling of an October 20 raid by more than a hundred Army Rangers who parachuted into a Taliban stronghold sixty miles southwest of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan. A second Special Operations unit assaulted a housing complex thought to be used by Mullah Mohammed Omar, the Taliban leader. General Myers told Pentagon reporters that the attack went off "without significant interference" from the enemy, and that the mission, "over all," was successful.

But in a controversial November 12 article in *The New Yorker*, Seymour Hersh wrote that, after leaving the complex, the Americans came under fierce counterattack and retreated hastily

under heavy fire, and that twelve U.S. soldiers were wounded, three of them seriously. The mission was a "total goat fuck" — military idiom for an operation gone terribly wrong — according to Hersh's sources. Pentagon officials denied the letter and spirit of Hersh's account, without offering an alternative scenario, except to say that some soldiers suffered cuts and bruises but that no one was hit by enemy fire.

Meanwhile, the columnist Robert Novak was reporting details of the same mission, which partly mirrored Hersh's; so was retired General Wesley Clark, the former NATO commander, in an interview in the *St. Petersburg Times*. British newspapers, including the *Guardian*, published reports similar to Hersh's.

Asked if he stands by his *New Yorker* story, Hersh answers, "I guess it's down to a question of what a serious injury is." Before publication, he turned over to David Remnick, the magazine's editor, the names of his sources. He accepts that the military never discusses casualties in so-called "black," or secret, operations. Thus, in the absence of eyewitness accounts, what really happened on that October 20 mission will remain, for now at least, a matter for dispute between journalists and the Pentagon braintrust.

If news from the Pentagon has been carefully orchestrated, news of the actual shooting war between Northern Alliance and Taliban forces has been gathered without let or hindrance by any journalists willing to risk the terrible dangers. Vietnam is the model for that brand of free-wheeling, unfettered newsgathering; correspondents roamed the country at will, took their chances in battle, and interviewed whomever they chose.

My own experience of wartime press-military relations extends to Vietnam in the 1960s and to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in 1991. A correspondent in Saigon could taxi out to Ton Son Nhut airport, hop aboard a helicopter or cargo plane heading for Pleiku or Danang or Hue, or wherever the action was that day, then accompany the troops on search-and-destroy missions into the deepest rain forest, all the while interviewing commanders and foot soldiers who, routinely, were happy to have press notice. That all ended in the Persian Gulf, where the military virtually closed down journalistic enterprise in favor of

guided tours of the front by public affairs officers who led pools of obedient, unhappy journalists on brief visits to fighting units, and then reviewed their dispatches for possible mischief.

By late September in the current conflict, well before the October 7 start of bombing, journalists were crowding Tajikistan hoping to buy a \$300 helicopter ride into the rebel-held sectors of northern Afghanistan. Some went in by donkey, others in truck convoys navigating treacherous mountain terrain. Several sneaked into Taliban territory garbed from head to toe like women in traditional burkhas. "Some reporters moved on horseback, or took hair-raising car journeys over bad roads," says Anthony Williams, a Reuters news editor in London. "A rented car can cost \$3,000," according to Mark Miller, chief of correspondents for *Newsweek*.

The local food brought bouts of salmonella, dysentery, fever, giardiasis. Freelance bandits preyed on journalists, knowing they carried large amounts of American dollars (credit cards are useless there) and expensive electronic equipment. Says CNN's Jordan: "The biggest challenge we face is just keeping our people alive." Photographer Tyler Hicks captured, close-up, some of the most brutal images of the war for *The New York Times*: Northern Alliance troops hauling a wounded Taliban soldier from a ditch, shooting him in the chest, then beating him with a grenade launcher and leaving him half-naked in the road to die. By mid-December, more journalists than U.S. troops had been killed by hostile fire.

"TELL THEM WHO WON"

No matter the hazards that journalists have suffered to get the Afghanistan story — and the superb reporting that has marked much of their work — the public blames the press and supports the military in contretemps between the two. A mid-November Gallup poll showed an 80 percent approval rating for Secretary Rumsfeld's handling of the war on terrorism (89 percent for President Bush) and a dismal 43 percent for the news media. The reasons, according to Gallup: journalists' role as the bearers of bad news puts them at odds with administration officials, who at this moment are seen as doing a commendable

job. A November Pew Research Center poll showed the public solidly behind the military: half of the respondents say the military should exert more control over news about the war; only 40 percent think the media should decide how to report it. More than half (53 percent) favor censorship of war news when the national interest is involved.

Fully 82 percent believe the Pentagon is disclosing as much as it can about operations in Afghanistan.

That jibes with the experience of the *Los Angeles Times*, which receives "a torrent of abuse" — according to foreign editor Simon Li — whenever it publishes detailed reports on troop activity in the battle zone. "As if the Taliban had to read the *Los Angeles Times* to know where the action is." Even before the bombing began, *USA Today* was condemned, in a widely circulated chain letter, for a page-one scoop in which it revealed that American soldiers already were operating inside Afghanistan. The chain letter called for a boycott of the newspaper.

In wartime, the press and the military are rarely on cozy, familial terms, which hasn't happened since World War II. Even in that conflict, a government censor in 1943 had a cranky answer to the question: How much should the American public, through the press, be told about the war. "I'd tell them nothing till it's over," he said, "and then I'd tell them who won."

The two cultures are essentially irreconcilable, each with its valid agenda. The press expects candor and cooperation from the government so the public may be informed about a war conducted in its name; it expects officials not to impede independent, enterprising news coverage except where operational or national security unambiguously might be compromised. From the media, governments want fair, consistent, non-exploitive treatment that appreciates the complexity of prosecuting a modern war. Ideally, the good-faith tension between those two sets of aspirations serves the public best.

Rumsfeld told reporters recently that he understands "the need to provide the press — and through you, the American people" — the fullest possible menu of information. Defending the American way is what the war in Afghanistan is all about, he said, "and that certainly includes freedom of the press."

It depends on what the meaning of the word "freedom" is. ■

Neil Hickey is CJR's editor at large.

Larry Flynt's War

Journalists sued the government over press access during the gulf war, and they've done so this time around, too. Last time it was The Nation, the liberal journal of opinion — on behalf of a number of publications and highbrow writers such as E.L. Doctorow and William Styron — charging that the military unfairly and unconstitutionally barred reporters from the battlefields. By the time the judge could rule, however, the war was over and the case was moot.

Now, a decade later, another conflict has exploded and another magazine has dragged the government into court. This time it is the porn publisher Larry Flynt who filed suit against Donald Rumsfeld and the Department of Defense in November for the right of Hustler correspondents to accompany American troops in Afghanistan.

Flynt is no stranger to seemingly insurmountable legal battles, however. He has weathered obscenity trials and other challenges to government censorship. He filed suit against the government in 1983 for prohibiting reporters from covering the initial stages of the United States-led invasion of Grenada. Flynt lost that suit, a case that unfortunately foreshadowed media coverage of this new war. CJR assistant editor Joshua Lipton interviewed him.

Why are you suing the government and what do you hope to accomplish?

First of all, a long tradition exists in this country, dating to the Civil War, of journalists being allowed to accompany troops on the battlefield. That continued through World War I, the Second World War, Korea, and Vietnam. Think how many lives possibly were saved by the press's reporting of the war in Vietnam. But after Vietnam, presidents and high-ranking officials began treating the press as adversaries. Reagan invaded Grenada. President Bush senior invaded Panama and then ran the gulf war. In each case there were severe restrictions on the press. Afghanistan is the straw that broke the camel's back. The American people have a right to know how the military is conducting the war. The press has an obligation to report it. It's an important First Amendment issue. This lawsuit should have been filed by the mainstream press, not me. But I think they're too worried about who is going to get the next interview with George and Laura Bush.

But there are many reporters on the ground in Afghanistan.

Yes, but hardly any of them are permitted to be with American troops. The Pentagon can't use the argument that eight journalists have already died, so it's too dangerous. Roosevelt could have made that argument in World War II, but journalists were allowed to cover the war, and it was dangerous. If reporters want to risk their lives, put themselves in harm's way, that's their business, not Donald Rumsfeld's. I think the reason the Defense Department doesn't want reporters with our troops is that if they screw up, they want to cover it up. They can't cover it up if the press is there.

Where in the Constitution does it say that the military must assist reporters?

It does not say that. But free speech is inherent in our First Amendment, and the exercise of this free speech is paramount. The military owes its cooperation. If it's not giving its cooperation, then it's interfering with the exercise of free speech.

How can we expect the military to act effectively under intense media scrutiny?

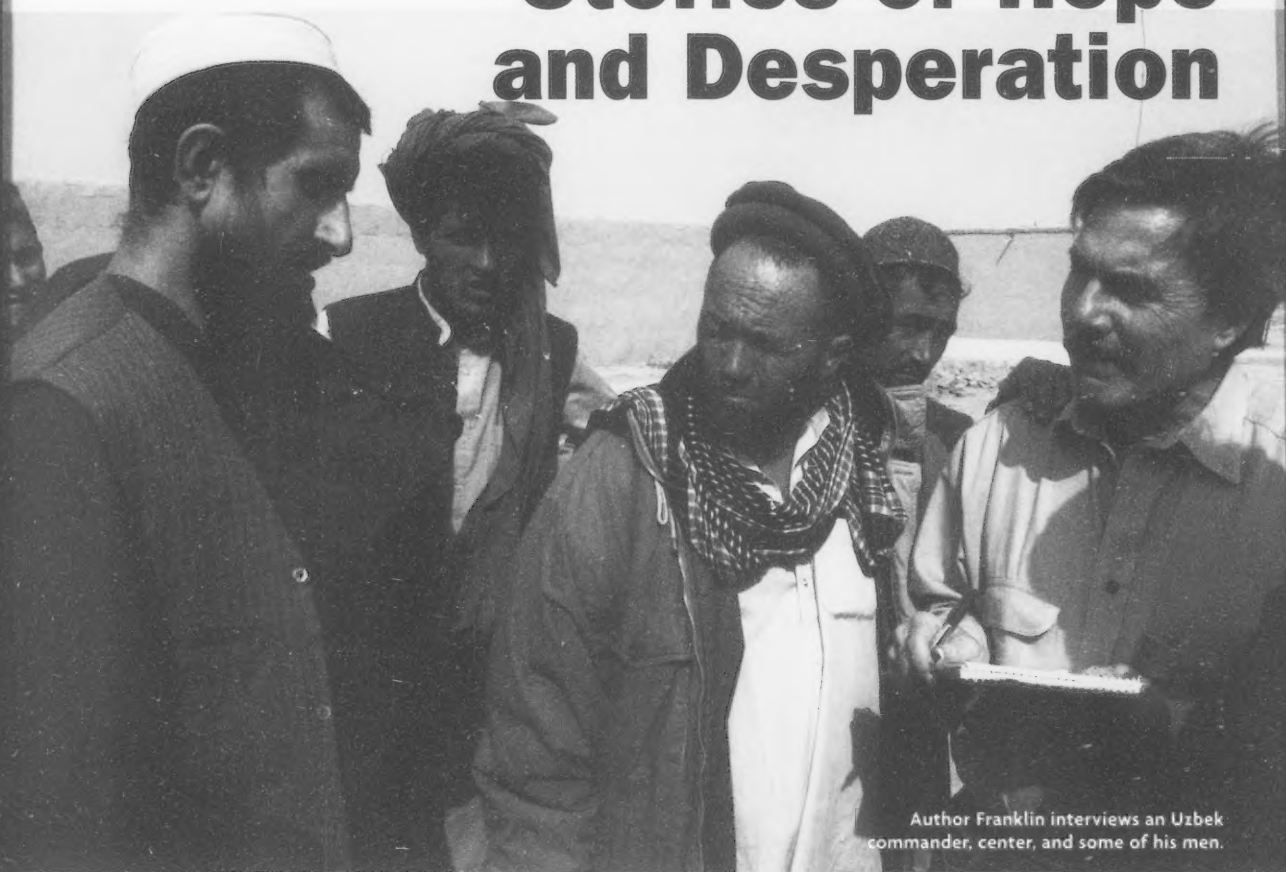
We make an important concession in the suit. All reporting would be submitted to a ground commander for possible censorship, as regards issues of national security and the welfare of the troops. That's an argument they'll have an extremely difficult time dealing with. We're not saying that we want carte blanche. Suppose a TV cameraman shoots fifteen minutes of film but only one minute of that film is approved by the field commander for release. At least then you have fourteen minutes that's preserved for posterity. And that's what this issue is about.

Are you disappointed that mainstream media are not parties to your suit?

When I took my case to the Supreme Court involving the Reverend Jerry Falwell in 1988 — which I won in a unanimous decision — not a single member of the mainstream media would join me in that case. But still they're reaping the benefits because now parody is protected speech. Jay Leno and David Letterman and *Saturday Night Live* have monologues and skits that are much more on the biting edge than they were before. That's because I won that suit.



Stories of Hope and Desperation



Author Franklin interviews an Uzbek commander, center, and some of his men.

BY STEPHEN FRANKLIN
PHOTOS BY PETE SOUZA

I sighed as I boarded the Tajik Air flight from Moscow to Dushanbe, Tajikistan, stepping over a worn oriental rug used as a doormat for passengers. Whitewashed by time, the old Russian-made plane worried me.

Then, as it began its takeoff, it didn't seem to be climbing very much. I told myself that this was because of all the giant-sized bundles the Tajik passengers had piled on board in Moscow. Instinctively, I closed my eyes. Sure enough, there was an ear-shattering roar inches from my head. I assumed that I would soon feel what I was hearing. But I didn't. Slowly I opened my eyes and saw that, just above me, a large hunk of the plane's inner metal shell had fallen

down, so that I could hear the engines' wild roar and the wind rushing by. Only a thin metal skin with ancient-looking wires running along it separated me from the sky.

What else, I wondered, lies ahead?

I couldn't get out of Dushanbe fast enough. My time there was spent waiting at a Tajikistan government public information office, and at the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in exile, the government kicked out of Kabul five years earlier by the Taliban. I spent money left and right on forms and visas. Although they were asking for the world's support for their fight against the Taliban, the rebel Afghans were not handing out visas freely to everyone. They rejected an Israeli reporter outright, saying Israelis aren't welcome to their Afghanistan. Later,

inside Afghanistan, they were less than helpful towards Syrian-born correspondent from Middle East Broadcasting (MBC), one of the major Arab television satellite stations. Their hatred of Osama bin Laden and his Arab allies was so deep, they seemed to want little to do with Arabs. And after all, Arabs posing as journalists two days before the attacks in the U.S. had assassinated Ahmed Shah Masoud, the Northern Alliance's charismatic defense minister. The man from MBC was the only Arab journalist I came across.

The only way to get to Afghanistan from Dushanbe was via a convoy led by Tajik officials, so along with Pete Souza, a *Chicago Tribune* photographer, I joined a caravan of mostly Soviet-made jalopies. After several hours, we passed strikingly beautiful mountains and enormous cotton fields that filled whole valleys. The

CHICAGO TRIBUNE/PETE SOUZA

road vanished, replaced by a dusty plain. We reached the Afghanistan border at nightfall, and Russian border guards flat out refused to let anyone pass. They ran the border, not the Tajiks, who insisted they had all of the proper paperwork needed for the departing journalists. But since the Russian commandos were the masters of the border, invited to guard it by the Tajiks because of their fears of the Taliban and other militant Islamic groups, the Russians reserved the right to decide whether to open it or not. They eventually did, but hours later, after many pleas by the Tajik officials. They also set up their own scale of exit fees for the foreign journalists. Two Swiss journalists in front of us pleaded poverty, but got pinched for \$100 each. Rumor had it that a bunch of Japanese journalists had handed over bundles of cash. I mumbled something in my limited Russian and, astoundingly, we went free.

We crossed a narrow stretch of the Amu River in pitch darkness aboard a rickety metal barge. Turn off your flashlights, shouted an Afghan soldier with the Northern Alliance. Taliban snipers on the mountaintop can see us, he said. (This was back when the Taliban had squeezed the alliance into a relatively small corner of the country, not vice versa.) On the other shore, we piled into waiting jeeps and headed for Khodja Bahaudin, a dusty, miserably poor town that had only come to life when the Northern Alliance and its warlord members, fleeing from advancing Taliban troops, had stationed some of their fighters there several years ago. The jeeps heaved and tossed in the darkness. There were no roads, and there were ruts and deep holes left from the fighting with the Russians and from the rains that turn some parts of Afghanistan in the winter into a sea of mud.

There were about thirty of us bouncing around. "Where's the press hotel?" shouted a Serbian journalist suited up in an army camouflage outfit. He described himself as a military expert and rattled off the battles he had seen in the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere. But at the Northern Alliance compound, where most journalists were staying, there was only the ground to sleep on. All of the Iranian Red Crescent tents were taken. So we slept briefly, awakened by the morning call issued by the chickens, donkeys, and dogs.



A hungry child searches for fallen grain.

Pete and I were in a hurry. We wanted to file a story soon. And so, we found a translator and a driver, each demanding the \$100-a-day rate set by the Northern Alliance, and rushed off in search of refugees. I was supposed to explain the mindset of the Taliban and their rivals, to feed into daily coverage coming out of the Pentagon and Pakistan and to capture the look and feel of life in such a tortured place. Not a light load. But Afghans did not shy from telling their stories. Nor was their misery hidden. In no time, we discovered a group wandering in the blazing sun. They had been fleeing the Taliban for days on foot. It was a stunning picture, the women, covered from head to toe in brightly colored burkhas, plodding along on the sun-baked earth. The middle-aged father who trailed behind his wife and daughters was convinced that they would die of hunger soon. Just beyond them we found a newly created

refugee camp. Most of the people were sick and starving. One man held up all he had to feed his family, a piece of bread so stale it seemed petrified. Our work had begun.

Driving along one day, we came across a mass of people lined up for a weekly food distribution from one of the few foreign relief agencies on hand. What was so compelling about the scene was the young girls who raced forward every time a bag was hefted off the truck. They would rush to scoop up into their aprons the few kernels of wheat that had tumbled into the dust.

Most stories seemed to come that way: they simply tumbled into our laps. Many times Pete saw a photo essay in his head, and that's what led us to the story. There was an army commander who complained that many of his soldiers were illit-



A land mine victim rests in a hospital.



A boy soldier who cannot read.

erate youngsters who could not read a map. Thus, a story about boy soldiers. ("I would like to write a letter. I would like to read a letter," one of them told me.) And there was the new whitewashed schoolhouse in the refugee camp set up by a foreign relief agency, where the children were so starved for education that they swallowed up their learning. Thus, a story about teaching young girls to read. And there was the doctor at the four-room mud hut called a hospital, who lamented the fact that most land-mine victims would never receive new arms and legs because rehabilitation facilities were so sparse. Thus, a story on land mines, in one of the nations most afflicted by land mines. Without pictures, the stories would have never really captured the moment.

And some stories simply fell on us, as on the night that peanut butter and jelly dropped from the starry-eyed sky.

At first, half asleep in the middle of the

night, I thought that the Taliban were attacking with mud bombs because that was the sound of the little plastic packages hitting the house made of mud and straw where we had found a room. I was too tired to get out of my sleeping bag, so I listened to the pounding on the roof and walls, hoping the Taliban would just go away. But when I heard the carnival-like cheering out in the streets, I wandered out and discovered hundreds of people, clutching flashlights or gasoline lamps, scooping up the small food packages dropped by the Americans. The next day children kept rushing up to me, saying "teshekur," or "thank you" in Dari, a derivative of Farsi, the language spoken by Tajiks. But there was no joy among the refugees who lived far from the U.S. food drop and therefore did not get any food. They begged me that day to let the Americans know where they were. They were so sure the Americans would come back. They also wanted the

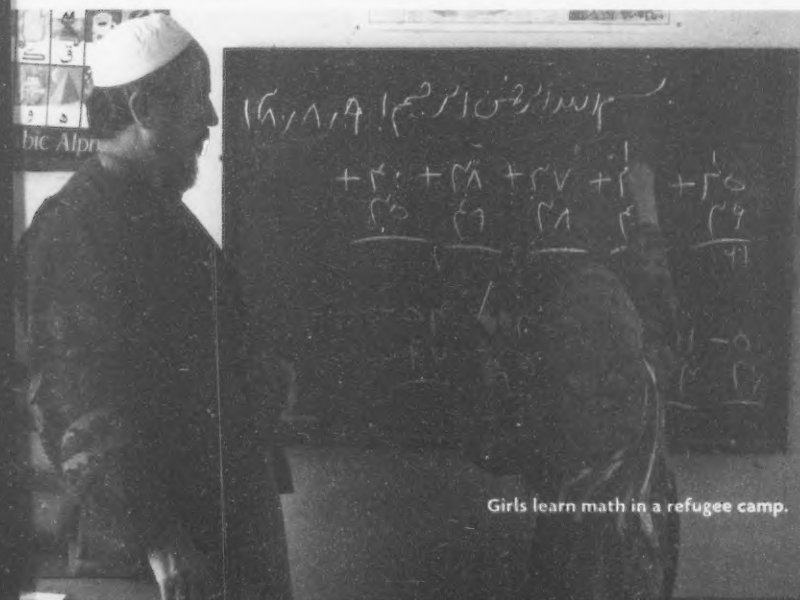
Americans to know that they were cold and needed tents for the winter.

Beyond what we could see and hear, we were living and reporting in a bubble. My editors back in Chicago realized this, and thankfully accepted the fact that I could not provide them with the up-to-the-minute big picture. We talked twice daily by satellite telephone, meaning that I could call them, but they could not reach me. I could not keep my phone running, because electricity was so valuable. At first we scrounged electricity from a Northern Alliance office, plugging in our equipment for hours at a time there. But when other journalists claimed the outlets we had to resort to buying a car battery, and finally a generator. Most of the time in our pre-generator period, however, we depended on gasoline lamps for light, and I wrote at night, wearing a mountain climber's flashlight on my forehead.

My editors seemed to welcome the stories, in which I tried to get across a sense of the people and the land, a stretch of breathtaking, barren, russet-colored mountains and a desert-like plain parched by a lingering drought, worse than many Afghans could remember. When a terrible dust storm blew in, announcing the coming of winter, I wrote what it felt like to be pelted by a bone-chilling wind and blinding dust in the northern Afghanistan towns, where electricity and running water do not exist and food supplies were dwindling.

The problem with getting the bigger picture was that it was not there, at least not for me. The Northern Alliance's offices were spread out, making it almost impossible to find out what was happening. The opposition officials in Khodja Bahaudin were not very helpful either. Telephones did not exist, and a trip to the next major city was a risky all-day adventure, taking pains to skirt land mines laid by the Taliban or clinging to narrow mountain roads. Different sources gave vastly different versions of the military situation.

I quickly learned to rely on the foreign relief agencies for their reading of the military and health situations. They were certain early on — correctly as it turns out — that the Northern Alliance would attack, and so were planning to set up emergency medical facilities to back up the fighters. The Northern Alliance had no such support otherwise. They were also convinced that the potential for famine was great in several areas if food



Girls learn math in a refugee camp.

supplies were not stocked before the treacherous Afghan winter began and mountainous villages became isolated by thick snowstorms. So, too, they worried what would happen if the Northern Alliance swept across the country, opening up new rivers of refugees traveling in a country long without order or stability. Again, they were right. Refugee camps swelled. Roads were lined with people fleeing the fighting or headed back to where they came from. And food and medical supplies were insufficient. Death and hunger stalked everyone everywhere.

The relief agencies also supplied me with informal briefings on the warlords. One was a peculiarly reclusive and dramatic fellow who preferred to sit in the darkness, wearing sunglasses and twirling his prayer beads. On his desk were several small green flags from the Party of Islam, one of the more radical Islamic factions among the Afghan mujahedeen, or holy warriors, with whom he had once fought. At the end of an interview, he demanded that I write a statement in English in his diary, disavowing any criticism of warlords. But another warlord was much more open and welcoming, allowing several foreign journalists to live on his compound in Dashti Cala. By time we arrived, however, there was no room for us.

He was an Uzbek, one of the minorities that dominate the Northern Alliance. I speak Turkish, learned years ago as a Peace Corps volunteer. And since Turkish comes from the same family as Uzbeki, we chatted along in Uzbeki and Turkish, each of us missing every other word, but somehow grasping the greater meaning. He became my best source. Our young Afghan translator, a Tajik who had studied English for one year in high school in Pakistan, improved his command of English daily, too. He no longer said "many Taliban are surprising today" when he meant that they were surrendering.

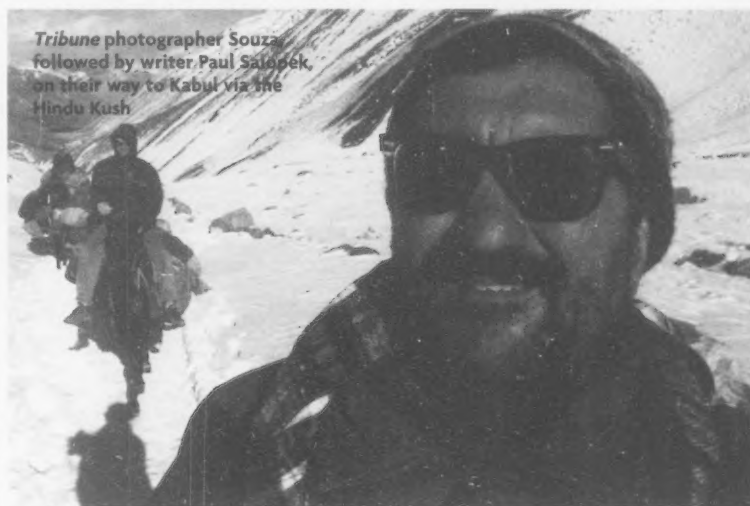
At night, I studied Dari with a middle-aged Afghan who once was a high school teacher, and who had learned English thirty years ago from a Peace Corps volunteer. He had later become a lawyer for the government in Kabul. But he was now working as a servant in the small guest house where we lived. He had fought against the Russians, suffered several serious and long-lasting injuries in the decade-long struggle, and had lost three of his own children as a result of the Russians' bombing of his village and of fighting without adequate food or health care. I wrote a profile of him, a sort of reporter's notebook, hoping his story would be seen

as a metaphor for Afghanistan's dismay and tortured disintegration.

We lived at first on bread and rice and potatoes. Then we added raw onions, and then one day we added honey when we found a bottle for sale in town. If we remembered, we carried PowerBars when we were traveling around so we would not be famished. Since so many journalists had been sickened by the food and water, we were being extra cautious. We drank whatever bottled water we had managed to carry with us from Tajikistan, and endless cups of the green tea favored by Afghans. Still, something horrible eventu-

But Volker stood out. He was tall and muscular with long, curly blond hair that he sometimes wore tied back. He sometimes wore a bright green Uzbek overcoat that was about as out of place on him as possible. He seemed to know everything first, as well as everyone who mattered in the Northern Alliance, and to take a special pride in his instincts. But he was always helpful, sharing his advice in careful whispers.

When the Northern Alliance attack finally began, he went off with five other journalists in a Russian-made armored personnel carrier along with a commander to take a nighttime view of what they had been told were deserted Taliban trenches. They weren't. The Taliban at-



ally attacked my stomach, for which I took medicine upon returning home.

We learned from others what trips and what sources would pay off. We quickly realized that no long trips should be taken without companions in case one vehicle broke down. Among the foreign journalists, it did not seem to matter that much where you came from. If you spoke English, and most did, you had something in common. At the compound of Commander Hassan, the friendly Uzbek warlord in Dashti Cala, one of these journalists was Volker Handloik, forty, a war-savvy, veteran free-lance writer with the German magazine, *Stern*. On the road out of Dushanbe I had met his colleague, a middle-aged photographer for *Stern*, who appeared to have witnessed almost every chaotic event of the last few decades and seemed unruffled by all of them. We talked about the loneliness of such work and the price that families back home pay for it.

tacked in the darkness with grenades and other weapons. Some of the journalists were thrown from the carrier as it wildly raced up and down hillsides for safety. Along with two French journalists, Johanne Sutton, 34, and Pierre Billaud, 31, Volker was thrown loose and killed by the Taliban gunfire. Their looted bodies were later recovered from the Taliban trenches.

Strange, I can still see Volker, so sure and savvy. ■

Stephen Franklin splits his time between foreign assignments and the labor beat at the Chicago Tribune. He is the author, most recently, of Three Strikes, an analysis of major midwestern labor battles of the 1990s. He wrote about Saudi Arabia's press for CIR during the gulf war in July/August 1991; a reporter's guide to Islam, January/February 1995; and on the growth of Arab-world satellite networks November/December 1996.

AT THE FRONT

Three Minutes From Death

BY JIM WOOTEN

We crossed into Afghanistan in the dead of night before Thanksgiving — accompanied by heavily armed mujahedeen sent by the military commander of Jalalabad and the country's eastern region.

"I thought the Taliban were all gone," I told him when we arrived.

"Not quite," said Haji Zaman, "and also there are bandits."

"How do we tell the difference?"

"The bandits don't kill you," he'd said.

He'd served us dinner at his headquarter-compound — rosy bread, roasted goat with radishes and fresh lettuce from his garden — and had promised we could accompany his men to the mountains the next morning to cover either a Taliban surrender or a continuation of the fighting there. Either one was fine with me — getting close to the war was why we were there — but I was even more fascinated with the place we were going. It was called Tora Bora, precisely where U.S. and Pakistani intelligence had recently placed Osama bin Laden.

It was a long shot, of course, but one hell of a story, and I was exhilarated enough by the prospects not to have minded sleeping that night on a hard couch in a scabrous little hotel that could find only one room — and that after an outrageous bribe to the clerk — for the nine people in our crew.

The place was crawling with reporters, correspondents, cameramen, photographers, engineers, satellite technicians, and translators from all over the world, most of whom were packing that morning, getting ready to leave for Kabul, which was our ultimate destination as well, but not before we had a run down to Tora Bora.

Keith Richburg of *The Washington Post* was in the lobby, also headed for the capital.

"So," he asked, "what are you guys up to?"

Not much, I lied.



But as it turned out, it was the truth. We kept our rendezvous at Haji Zaman's compound — on the dot — only to be told we would not be allowed to go with the mujahedeen to the mountains.

"You promised," I reminded him.

"Too dangerous," he said.

"What about the surrender?"

"No surrender today."

"Tomorrow?"

"Perhaps." He shrugged and disappeared into his house, leaving his aide, an enormous fellow, to tell us that it would also not be possible to provide an escort for us when we traveled on to Kabul.

"You promised," I reminded him.

"Too busy," he said.

"What about the road?"

"The road is perfectly safe."

The hotel was humming when we returned. Satellite dishes were being disassembled and somehow fitted back into their big trucks. Afghan drivers with vans and cars were competing for jobs, haggling with reporters over the price of the trip, arguing with each other about deals already made. A huge, rattletrap bus sat in the portico, crammed to the

gills with equipment and gear. Painted in English on its door was "Welcome with Pleases. Good Your Trip." A couple of bellmen were struggling with several huge metal cases, trying to fit them into an already full Land Rover. It was clear that a collective journalistic judgment had been made. For the moment, at least, the story in Jalalabad was over. There would be plenty of room in the inn that night.

We decided to join the crowd. We grabbed a late breakfast, set up the sat-phone, called New York to let them know our plans, and began re-packing the old white bus we'd arrived in. It was no small task. Network news does not lightly go to war. Our contingent consisted of three producers, a two-man camera crew, two translators, the driver, and myself. In addition to our personal paraphernalia — books and maps, laptops and printers, back-packs and bed-rolls, a jacket we'd been asked to deliver to a fellow with Reuters in Kabul — our cargo included camera, tripod, lights, spare bulbs, microphones and audio-mixers, fuses and batteries and chargers, a hefty generator, boxes of video-tape,

satellite video-phone, cases of food and cartons of water, flak-vests and helmets and enough electrical cable and cord to connect Hoboken to Queens, all this leaving precious little space for passengers. We paid the bill and I squeezed into a narrow niche in the rear, slightly nostalgic for my old newspaper days when all I really required was a notebook, a pen, and a few coins for the payphone.

Still, I was right where I wanted to be, and as we pulled out of the hotel driveway, trailing most of the main media convoy but ahead of some of our colleagues, I was pleased to be on the road. We had struck out on Tora Bora but we were three hours from Kabul, a city I knew was overflowing with stories.

For a country almost totally destroyed by a generation of war, the highway west from Jalalabad was in surprisingly good condition, narrow but smoothly paved — for about fifteen miles. After that, it became a rough-and-tumble, rock-and-gravel, wilderness road, thick with dust from passing vehicles. Yet each time the visibility returned, the landscape was breathtakingly stark. Both to the north and the south, beyond desolate plains stretching flatly for miles, dark mountain ranges disappeared into an infinity of shadows. We were following the Kabul River, which, despite three years of drought in most of Afghanistan, was flowing rapidly enough to create occasional crests of white-water — and here and there the dun-colored land would suddenly turn green with little oases of new corn and cauliflower, sprigs of young wheat and rice, growing next to tiny villages. Afghan farmers have been famous for centuries as mas-

ters of irrigation, a necessity for survival in such a barren land.

I yelled up to Tim Manning, our South African cameraman. "You see anything you like," I told him, "stop the bus and shoot it."

"Anything?"

"Beauty shots," I said. "Or ugly shots. Whatever."

He was busy teaching James, the British sound-man, how to talk dirty in Afrikaans — but in a moment, he asked the driver to stop, left the bus, shouldered his camera and began filming a group of young girls trying to persuade a half-dozen camels to move in a direction they clearly did not wish to go. The girls eventually prevailed and headed off with their charges, gradually diminishing in the distance, finally disappearing

over a hill.

Wonderful, I thought. I had no idea how I would use it in a story but I knew I would damn well try.

Several cars passed us, going toward Kabul, and the dust they kicked up forced Tim to stop shooting for a moment. He spotted a man dragging a recalcitrant goat toward his herd and rolled a few frames on that. When he finished, we climbed back onto the bus and resumed our journey.

It was about to end.

A few miles farther on, a car suddenly appeared, heading toward us at high speed. The driver's arm was out the window, waving frantically, apparently flagging us down. As we passed, I saw him



Tim Manning's video: It may have saved lives.

TIM MANNING/ABC NEWS (LONDON BUREAU)

draw his finger across his throat. He skidded to a stop, leaped from the car and began running after us.

We shouted to our driver to stop. Gasping for breath, the man from the car yelled through the windows. "Ambush! Ambush!" he screamed. "They killed five journalists! Turn around! Turn around!"

There were four dead, not five, but Khalid Kazziha, a cameraman from Lebanon, had quite probably saved our lives. We were three minutes behind the victims' cars, and had Tim not decided to film the little girls and the camels, we would have been ten minutes ahead.

Back at the hotel that afternoon, most of those who had left earlier had returned and heard three Afghan witnesses — a translator and two drivers — recount the grim details.

Several men armed with assault rifles had stopped two cars in the convoy on a bridge near a village called Tangi Abrisham, some fifty miles from Kabul. In the first one were Harry Burton, a Reuters cameraman

Quedeer, and asked him to send militia to the scene of the ambush to investigate. When he seemed skeptical and reluctant, two of the journalists commandeered an ambulance from the local hospital and set out on their own. The governor finally dispatched several pickup trucks of mujahedeen, but so late in the afternoon that there was no possibility they would arrive at the scene before dark. In any case, they turned back and the reporters in the ambulance were refused permission to go much beyond the end of the good road. Too dangerous, they were told. There were snipers in the hills, firing down on passing vehicles.

There were several reports that passengers in cars and buses arriving in Jalalabad from Kabul had seen the bodies in the road — and that is where they remained through the night.

Haji Zaman's aide came to the hotel to say that he believed the ambush had taken place beyond the boundaries of the commander's authority. Haji Quedeer later appeared and told the journalists he did not really believe there

which I suggested that although the deaths were a grievous loss to the journalistic fraternity, Afghans for whom such violence is commonplace had hardly blinked an eye.

The bodies were finally recovered on Tuesday afternoon and driven to the border the next morning. I had spent the night there and watched their arrival. As a dozen men from the Khyber Rifles, a regiment raised by the British in 1878, formed an honor guard, a pair of Red Cross ambulances drove slowly through the frontier gates and stopped. The rough pine coffins were unloaded from each and hefted up into the empty chamber of a refrigerated truck. The lids were loose, the nails still showing, not completely driven. I wandered over to a gray van that had come with the ambulances. In the back were four pieces of luggage and a pile of gear and equipment, including expensive cameras and lenses belonging to Aziz. On the back seat was Harry Burton's Ikagami video camera, untouched and undamaged, worth at least \$75,000.

I remembered the words: 'The road is perfectly safe'

from Australia; Azizullah Haidari, a Reuters photographer from Pakistan; the translator, and the driver. Maria Grazia Cutuli, an Italian reporter for *Corriere della Sera*, and Julio Fuentes of *El Mundo* were in the second, along with their driver. The men shoved their weapons through the windows, ordered the Afghans out and told them to leave, warning them not to assist Western journalists again, not to drive them to Kabul or help them in any way. "If you think the Taliban are finished," said one of the men, "you are wrong. No one can destroy the Taliban."

The journalists were dragged from the cars and ordered to walk into the nearby hills. When they resisted, the men began pelting them with large rocks and stones, then beat them savagely with the butts of their guns. The three Afghans fled but, hearing a volley of gunfire, looked back over their shoulders and saw their passengers lying motionless on the road. Khalid, the AP cameraman, arrived and also saw the bodies. The four of them began warning approaching vehicles — and Khalid drove back toward Jalalabad to intercept others, including us.

After the witnesses had told their stories, a delegation of reporters went to the offices of the provincial governor, Haji

were any bodies. (The governor is the brother of Abdul Haq, a legendary hero of the resistance to the Soviet occupation and a potential political power in the country. Haq was lured from Pakistan into Afghanistan by the Taliban and assassinated in mid-October.)

I told the story on video-phone to our morning broadcast, then began putting together a piece for that evening. With ten hours' difference in time to New York, and five hours to London, British and American correspondents, print and broadcast, had plenty of time before their late deadlines. Several ate dinner in the hotel restaurant, among them Tim Weiner of *The New York Times*, a veteran of Afghanistan's violence. "It's unthinkable for Westerners or anybody else to drive that road without security," he said. "It's only luck if you get through without getting into trouble."

The satellite dishes had returned and were up and running by each evening and we transmitted a story that included pictures of the road shot by Tim during his interlude with the little girls and the camels, a few words from the witnesses and the reporters who'd tried to find the bodies — and an on-camera closing in

I remembered Haji Zaman's words.

"The bandits won't kill you," he had said.

I remembered his aide's assurance.

"The road is perfectly safe."

I remembered that the fleece jacket we were carrying belonged to Harry.

Three reporters had been killed previously when the Northern Alliance armored personnel on which they were riding was attacked by the Taliban. They were, by any definition, like thousands of others, military and civilian, casualties of the war. The four who died on the road to Kabul were, by any definition, the latest victims of terrorism, although all of them were clearly willing to accept the risks of their assignment. There is perhaps some comfort in knowing that no journalist goes into harm's way involuntarily. No media organization, including my own, would dare send its people in without their consent — and those who do go in believe their survival depends not merely on their skills, their instincts and their experience, but ultimately on their stars.

Three minutes and the kids with the camels. ■

Jim Wooten is the senior correspondent for ABC News.

The Dead

November 12: killed in surprise skirmish while accompanying Northern Alliance soldiers



above:
JOHANNE
SUTTON
left:
VOLKER
HANDLOIK



right:
PIERRE
BILLAUD

On a nighttime trip to see what they were told were empty battlefields, Joanne Sutton (Radio France International), Pierre Billaud (RTC Radio), and Volker Handloik (a free-lancer for Germany's *Stern Magazine*) were ambushed by Taliban forces. Handloik's body (above) lay on a gurney the next day.

November 19: slain on the road to Kabul



JULIO FUENTES

**AZIZ
HAIDARI**

HARRY BURTON

On a deserted stretch of highway between Jalalabad and Kabul, unknown gunmen forced the reporters out of their taxis, pelted them with rocks, and then shot them to death.

Australian Harry Burton and Azizullah Haidari, of Pakistan, worked for Reuters; Maria Grazia Cutuli reported for *Corriere della Serra*, a newspaper in Milan; and Julio Fuentes was a correspondent for Madrid's *El Mundo*.

CUTUJII, CHRISTIANO LARUFFA/GETTY;
FUENTES, ELMUNDO/GETTY; HADIRI, MIAN KHURSHEED/GETTY;
LIBRINI, DANIEL KOBORZINSKI/GETTY



**ULF
STRÖMBERG**

November 27: slain by armed robbers in Taloan

Ulf Strömberg, a Swedish TV cameraman, died after armed robbers broke into a house in Taloqan, where he was staying with other Swedish journalists, and shot him in the chest.



AT THE FRONT/PHOTO ESSAY: YANNIS KONTOS

Collision of Cultures

Before Kabul fell, and covering the war in Afghanistan took a deadly turn, the challenge for journalists on the ground was often as much about the logistics of living day to day as it was about staying alive. "For all of us it is very difficult there," says Yannis Kontos, a Greek free-lance photo-journalist who documented the daily lives of reporters covering the early days of the war in a

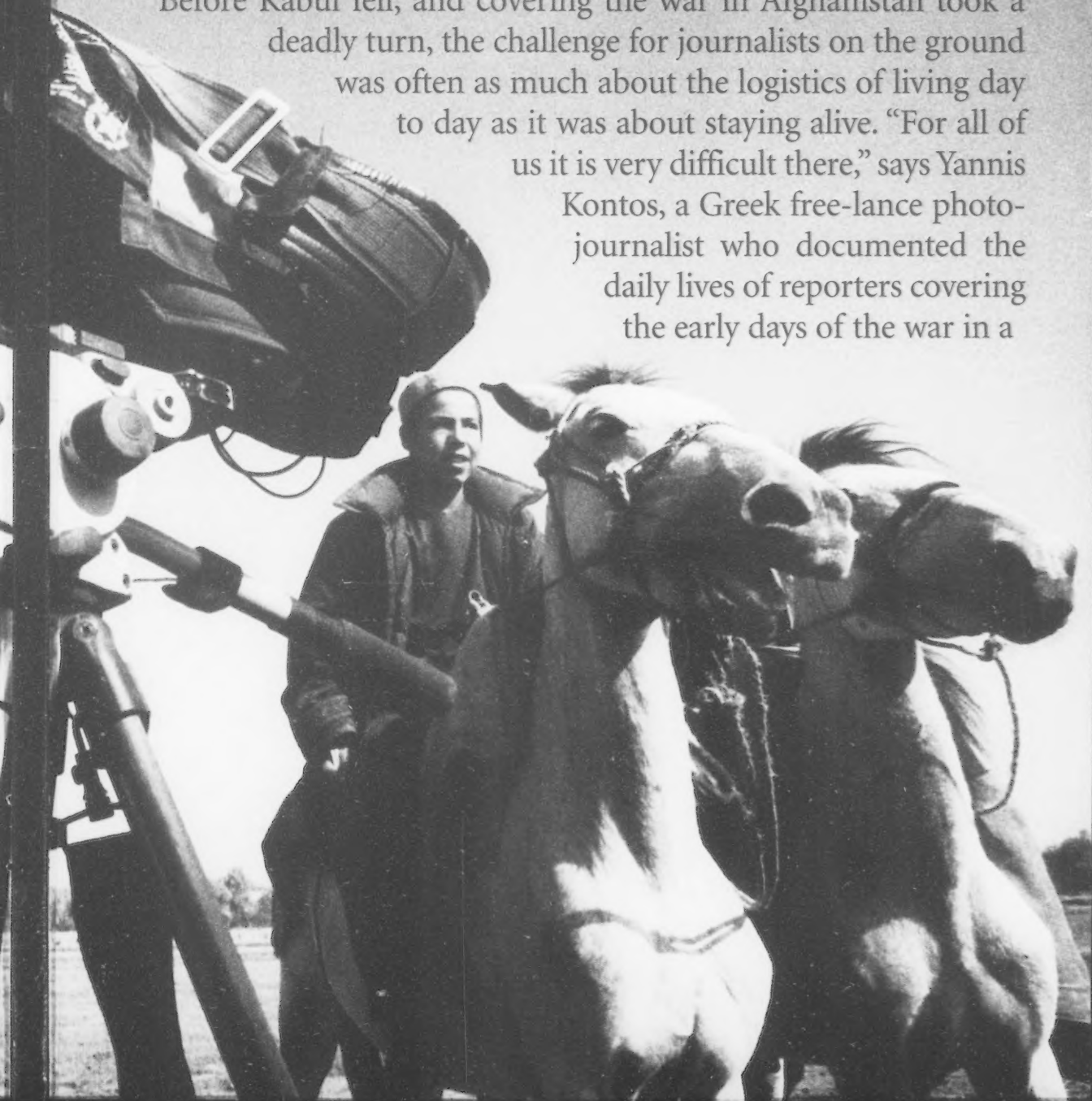


photo essay. "The food, the water, how to work, where to sleep. Just living can be more difficult than the bullets, than the danger."

Since then, though, eight journalists have been killed and the danger of covering this war has come horribly into focus. But the conditions and the culture shock remain a part of the journalists' story, the constant backdrop to the fear and the rush.

Kontos's photos, taken around the towns of Khodja Bahaudin and Dashti Cala, get at the intersection of the high-tech tools of the journalists and the primitive conditions of local life in Afghanistan: The men on horseback arrayed behind a \$50,000 TV camera; the CBS correspondent preparing for his morning report above the cluster of tents in the dusty compound of the network's makeshift headquarters. "I'm sure most of these people I encountered had never seen a camera, or Western clothes," says Kontos, thirty, who has covered war in Yugoslavia and Macedonia, an earthquake's devastation in Turkey, economic meltdown in Albania,



above: CBS News crew files from atop the private house in Khodja Bahaudin that serves as their headquarters.

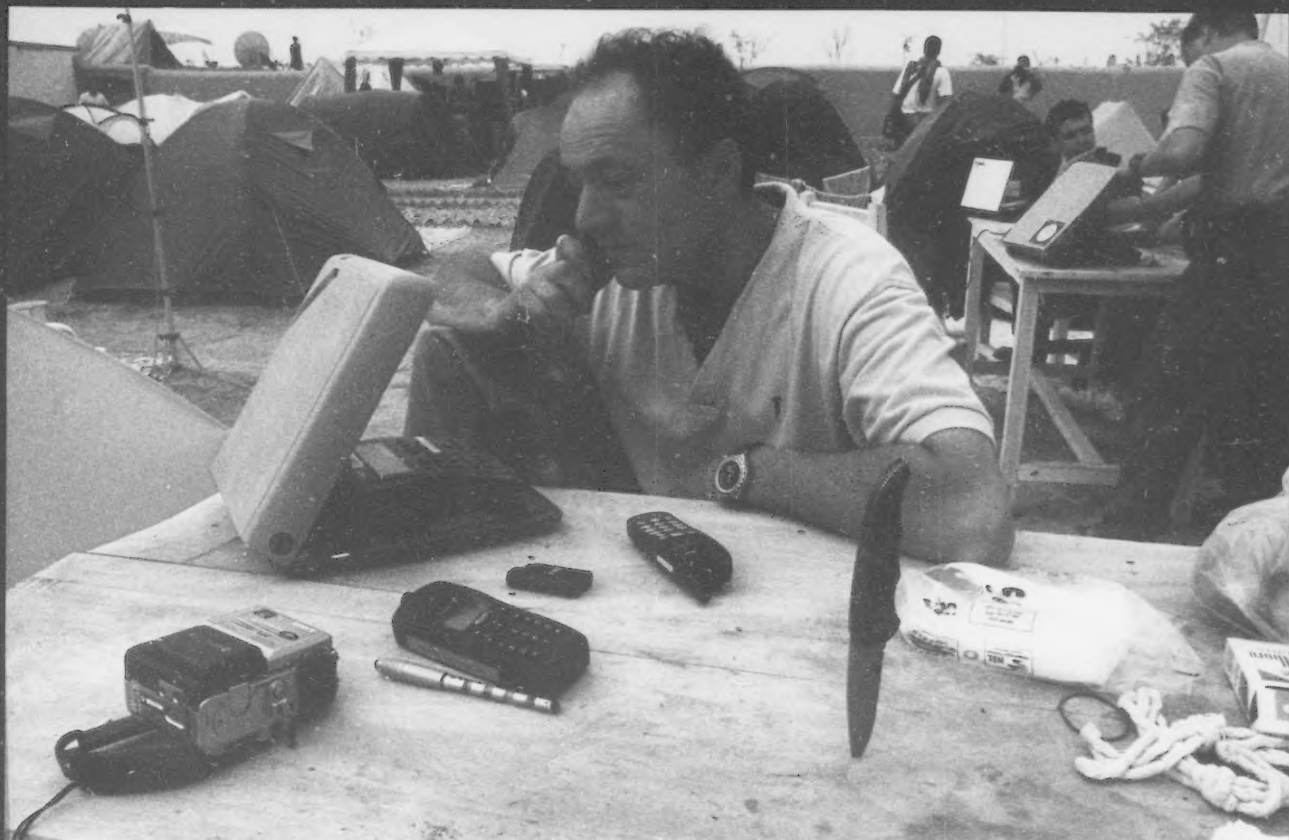
below: An Irish photojournalist talks to local men outside a food distribution center in Khodja Bahaudin.

and anti-globalization riots in Genoa.

No matter the assignment, Kontos says, there is always one photo that "tells the story." This time it is the one of the Irish photojournalist, cameras dangling, talking to some local men

who have been crippled by the land mines that pepper the Afghan countryside. Says Kontos: "You've got the Western guy, the locals, the crutches, the expression, the hand over the breast. It is everything." — Brent Cunningham





above: French TV correspondent talks to Paris via a satellite phone in the media camp run by ACTED, a French relief organization.

below: Over canned meat and dolmades, a Greek TV crew listens as their translator, center, reads back the day's interviews.



REVERBERATIONS

Across the land, a new sense of vigor and purpose is spurring regional dailies since September 11

It has become the post-September 11 cliché to say that the attacks on New York and Washington changed everything. But clichés have their kernels of truth.

Journalists and industry-watchers say that the events are making newsroom managers more aware of the need for hard news. Coverage of foreign events, government agencies, and the like is suddenly in the forefront, at least for now. But how permanent are the changes?

Through this series of windows, CJR takes a look at the various ways ten mid-sized and regional daily newspapers have been covering the crisis. Some have the re-

sources to chase stories overseas. Others focus on the local impact, describing how the events affect their readers' lives. But each region, and each newspaper, experience the war on terrorism differently, and how they cover it reveals something about their respective cultures.

No matter whom we spoke to, one theme repeatedly emerged: September 11 re-energized journalists and re-instilled in many of them the sense that what they do matters. Whether that renewed sense of purpose translates into a long-term commitment to excellence remains to be seen. The ball is in the managers' court now.

The Seattle Times

MAXIMIZING THE WEB VERSION

The Seattle Times understands that you've got to play to your strengths. When terror hit and war broke out, the paper's resources were limited. There were no foreign correspondents on staff, so the paper relied on wire copy. But as the conflict came into focus, the Times editors saw an opportunity to provide context. And they saw their Web site as one important way to do that. "We aren't going to be the ones who are always on the scene," says editor Mike Fancher. "But we can do something that connects locally with our readers."

A little more than a week after the attacks, the editors held the first of a series of meetings to design a package that would deal with the hydra-headed stories that sprang up.

They had done stories on Seattle-Tacoma airport's security and the effects of attacks on Muslims and Arab-Americans in the area, but they felt the events needed more than simply a day-by-day recounting of the previous day's developments. Culture, religion, history, local reactions, changes in the country's views of itself and the world — these all needed to be dealt with in a more comprehensive fashion. "We were going through titles like mad: 'Terror in America,' 'America at War,'" says Joy Jernigan, a breaking-news producer for *SeattleTimes.com*. The meetings resulted in an October 15 twelve-page special print section titled "Understanding the Conflict," and an accompanying, enriched Web version (<http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/news/nation-world/crisis/>).

"What ran in the newspaper special section was very limited compared to what we had on the Web," Jernigan says. And the section is periodically expanded. "It's a living project," she says. Server space is much less expensive than newsprint, and the designers and producers at *SeattleTimes.com* took advantage of that with interactive multimedia features, photos, and links. There's a section on U.S. foreign policy, focusing on the role that past American actions



might have played in shaping the anti-American anger at the heart of much of the conflict. There's a section on the military, where you can click through to a feature on Washington state's role in national defense, with interactive maps that let readers zoom in on the attributes of local shipyards and military facilities. There are interactive maps of all of the countries involved in the conflict, from Iran to the Central Asian Republics, with highlights of their respective histories. There are features about the cultural role of turbans and veils, explaining the significance of the various types of head dressings and how to tell them apart. There are RealPlayer streaming videos of key events, and a storehouse of graphics from the pages of the newspaper. There's also a discussion guide to help parents and teachers explain the events to children, and a list of books and Web sites for readers looking to delve further into the issues. "Understanding the Conflict" is a tone is somber. There's no jingoistic "us versus them" aspect to the features. They are presented even-handedly, and serve as a quiet refutation of the notion that America need not examine itself in the wake of the attacks.

SeattleTimes.com has nine editors and producers located in the newsroom. Fancher says that the newspaper approached the Web version with the same dedication that the print version received. "The producers who are responsible for local news and nation/world news sit across the aisle from the news desk and the metro desk," says Stanley Farrar, the managing editor for *SeattleTimes.com*. "They're really very tightly integrated into the newsroom operation."

Almost all newspapers put together special sections on their Web sites that display material collected for the print version, but *The Seattle Times* appears to understand the possibilities of the Web better than most. It uses many multimedia features and often gathers all the larger stories — such as those arising from the Microsoft antitrust trial, or a recent five-part investigative series about two deaths related to drug trials at a nearby cancer research facility — into special Web sections that have added sidebars, graphics, and videos.

"The limitations of print are the daily newshole and the discontinuity of a long story that has many, many pieces," Farrar says in explaining the strengths of a Web site in a newsroom where print is still king. But *The Seattle Times*, by paying the requisite attention to the needs of its Web site staff, works around both the limitations of print and the paper's own limited resources.

— John Giuffo

San Jose Mercury News

FIGHTING BACKLASH

Since September 11, the *San Jose Mercury News*, like every other paper in the country, has been full of stories about the war in Afghanistan. But the *Mercury News* has also covered a second front, right in its own backyard.

The paper circulates in one of the more ethnically diverse areas in the country. By some measures, it is also a fairly well-integrated area. Chinese and Indo-American immigrants, for example, direct about 25 percent of Silicon Valley's high-tech companies. But the terror attacks and the ensuing war exposed how fragile this integration is.

In the wake of the attacks, a Yemeni immigrant in San Jose was shot and killed, the suspected victim of a hate crime; a mother of two from Iraq awoke to find the hallway in her Daly City apartment smeared with feces; the local Sikh community complains of harassment; some Middle Eastern immigrants say they are afraid to leave their homes; and 66 percent of those responding to a *Mercury News* poll said they favored heightened surveillance of Middle Eastern immigrants.

Thanks to the foundation laid by its Race & Demographics team, which was formed in the mid-1990s, the *Mercury News* was prepared to cover this backlash. "The idea was to continue covering the increasing diversity of the Bay Area," says Ben Stocking, who has edited the team since 2000. "What's different now is the people affected by backlash." Before September 11, the team consisted of Stocking and four reporters. Now reporters and editors throughout the paper pitch ideas and contribute stories. Stocking says this increased coordination and cross-pollination among the various parts of the paper has produced some noteworthy pieces.

For example, members of the R&D squad worked with reporters from a suburban bureau and enterprise team to write **BACKLASH HITS HOME**, a story about how some Bay Area residents, scared of becoming hate crime victims, have stopped wearing traditional clothing, such as veils and turbans. The paper's religion writer teamed up with an R&D reporter for a piece about young Muslims struggling to define their identity and religion in secular America.

The *Mercury News* complemented the team's coverage on its editorial page. "People are shouting at women who wear head scarves, frightening some into staying home," the editors wrote. "Children are being harassed; parents are afraid to let

them walk to school." The editorial page also urged readers to express their support for those who feel maligned and to challenge those who stereotype. "International terrorists would love to see us turn against ourselves," the editors wrote. "Let's deny them that victory."

—Joshua Lipton

San Francisco Chronicle

GIVING PEACE A CHANCE

Many of the passengers on United Airlines Flight 93 the morning of September 11 were returning home to the San Francisco Bay area. So when editors at the *San Francisco Chronicle* learned that terrorists had crashed the airplane into the Pennsylvania countryside, they dispatched a reporter and photographer to the scene. The paper profiled the passengers, reported on their connections to northern California, and reconstructed the final minutes of the doomed flight.

The Bay Area's liberal credentials are legendary, however, and anger among the residents at the attacks was soon rivaled by frustration with the response of the United States government. The bombing campaign in Afghanistan sparked demonstrations in the San Francisco streets, and the *Chronicle* quickly found itself covering the most vocal anti-war movement in the country.

There were stories on a candlelight vigil in Lafayette, California, where people not only mourned the victims of September 11, but also worried about violent reprisals from the U.S. military; on a Berkeley city council resolution asking that the bombing in Afghanistan stop "as soon as possible"; on a 5,000-strong protest march in downtown San Francisco against the bombing campaign; and on a conscientious objector in the Air Force.

Columnist Stephanie Salter took up the cause of the protesters. "What we are doing in, above, and to Afghanistan is shortsighted, counterproductive, and immoral," she wrote on October 17. Salter received more than 1,500 e-mails from across the country, running about six to one in support of what she wrote.

The *Chronicle's* editorial page, though, is more hawkish than many of its readers. "We believe it will take military action — a relentless but focused counterattack — to wipe out the terrorist network that effectively declared war against us," a September 18 editorial argued. But the editors remain respectful of the dissenting views in their community. Barbara Lee, a Democratic congresswoman from Oakland, cast the only vote in the House against a resolution authorizing President Bush to use military force in Afghanistan. On the editorial page, the *Chronicle* took issue with Lee's decision, but supported her right to cast such a contentious vote: "To disagree with the government's approach at any given time as Lee did is not an act of betrayal. It's an affirmation of the democracy we're defending."

Managing editor Jerry Roberts says that covering all the anti-war rallies and protests means fewer resources and less time for other important stories. He says that the *Chronicle* did not, for instance, cover last fall's local elections with its usual care and investigative intensity.

But the tradeoff hasn't hurt sales. Since September 11, daily circulation has ballooned by about 10,000 copies. Bay Area readers seem to appreciate the *Chronicle's* coverage of the war, and of the peace movement that opposes it.

—J.L.

Chicago Tribune

COMMITMENT PAYS OFF

A few days after September 11, Tim McNulty, the *Chicago Tribune's* associate managing editor for foreign news, met in his office with two colleagues to plot the paper's war coverage. It was still early in the government's investigation, but all signs pointed to one part of the world. McNulty tacked up a *National Geographic* map of the Caspian region, and considered his options. He had many; the *Tribune*, with its staff of ten international correspondents, was ready.

Over the next few weeks, the paper sent Colin McMahon, its Moscow correspondent, to Uzbekistan. Mike Lev, based in Beijing, went to Pakistan. Liz Sly left London, also bound for Pakistan. Tom Hundley, the Rome correspondent, also hit Pakistan and was then in Iran for nearly two weeks. Paul Salopek, who won last year's Pulitzer for international reporting for his coverage of Africa, left South Africa and went to Saudi Arabia, where he tried to track down the hijackers' family members before the Saudi government "firmly suggested" that he leave. Then he went to Afghanistan, where, with photographer Pete Souza, he trekked over the Hindu Kush mountains in time to witness the liberation of Kabul.

"I've tried to keep up a rotation, depending on where they are," says McNulty, who says he wants to be careful not to burn out any of his foreign correspondents. So Uli Schmetzer, who is based in Tokyo, and Laurie Goering, who was covering Mexico and Central America from Mexico City, also went to Pakistan as part of the rotation. Patrice Jones, who is in Rio, is expected to head to the region soon.

But McNulty and other editors felt that the rotation left holes in some important areas, so they sent Stephen Franklin, who covers labor in Chicago but who has often reported overseas, to Tajikistan and then into Afghanistan (see page 32). Noreen Ahmed-Ullah, a metro reporter who speaks Urdu, was sent to the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Metro reporter Ernie Torriero went to Cairo to cover Arab reactions to the investigation and the war. Photographers Souza and John Lee landed in Afghanistan and Pakistan, respectively.

The U.S. government's investigation of the attacks also got extensive attention overseas. Investigative reporter John Crewdson went to Prague, Geneva, and Madrid as terror suspects were rounded up. Stephen Hedges left the Washington bureau for London to get the British angle. And Cam Simpson, from the metro desk, went to Germany and reported on the arrests and investigations there.

The *Tribune* is able to invest so much in the story, according to editors and others at the paper, because management recognizes the need for a strong international staff. "If you look at our newspaper over the last decade, we've had as many or more foreign stories on page one as local stories," says George De Lama, the deputy managing editor for news. So far, he says, "we have not had one person, not one time, even raise the issue of what it's been costing us to cover this."



Knight Ridder coordinated the efforts of its various papers. The idea is to avoid duplication of effort, and also to share the wealth, so that the chain's smaller papers get access to international and national coverage they would not get otherwise.

For this new war on terrorism, the idea of a chainwide team has been extended. Coverage is channeled through Knight Ridder's Washington, D.C., bureau where editors and reporters from the *Star*, *The Miami Herald*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *San Jose Mercury News* were drafted to work together on stories, including one on aviation safety (see *Laurels*, page 19).

Knight Ridder also dispatched eight reporters and three photographers — drawn from different papers — to Central Asia to supplement the chain's three full-time foreign correspondents, normally based in Jerusalem, Berlin, and London. Copy and photos are wired to the D.C. bureau, where stories are edited and packaged for Knight Ridder papers all over the country.

So the *Star* gets breaking national news on the attack and investigation, sometimes tailored to the interests of Missouri readers, without having to send its own reporters to New York, Florida, and elsewhere. "There are editors in D.C. who remember that a story has a good Kansas City connection so they'll write it that way or tell us about it," says Darryl Levings, the *Star's* assistant managing editor for national news.

A bigger deal at the *Star*, though, is that two of its reporters were among the eight that Knight Ridder sent to Central Asia. Scott Canon got to Kandahar and Malcolm Garcia has been covering news from Kabul. Garcia was sent, in part, because he had recently reported from Sierra Leone, and so he had his requisite medical shots as well as some seasoning. The *Star* has no foreign correspondents of its own, says Levings, so the Knight Ridder system is a cost-effective way for reporters to get experience abroad.

Back in Kansas City, *Star* editors and reporters found ways to complement the broadened reach of their coverage. They wrote about Chiefs' fans cheering the New York Giants when they took the field at Arrowhead Stadium. They chronicled the plight of Folu Oladipo, a young Kenyan immigrant living in Fayette, Missouri, who was jailed as part of the federal roundup in the wake of the attacks. And when anthrax spores turned up in a Kansas City post office, the *Star* ran a detailed report on the decontamination process.

Matt Stearns, who wrote the September 3 piece on the lakefront development, traveled to New York after the attack. Stearns and another reporter followed a Missouri search and rescue team as they assisted authorities at the World Trade Center. He accompanied a young woman, a Kansas City native, as she returned to the apartment downtown from which she had been evacuated on September 11.

When Stearns returned to the *Star*, he saw how his paper had adjusted its priorities while he was away. He recently wrote a story about a depressed town in southwestern Missouri lobbying for a casino. "In another time," he says, "that would have had a shot at the front page." —J.L.

It's uncertain to what extent the excesses of today will force the belt-tightening of tomorrow. "My information is that yeah, somewhere down the line, we have to pay for it," says Don Wycliff, the public editor, the *Tribune's* version of an ombudsman.

But the *Tribune* newsroom doesn't seem too worried. Plans to reopen a bureau in Delhi remain on track. "These events have underscored a point I suspect the editors and a lot of other people here on the news side have been making, which is that foreign news is as important as local news," Wycliff says.

The result is foreign wartime coverage that *Chicago Reader* media columnist Michael Miner calls "impressively comprehensive." —J.G.

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

POOLING GLOBAL EFFORTS

On September 3, local stories — one on a proposed lakefront development in Branson, Missouri, and another on a plan to overhaul I-70 — anchored the front-page of *The Kansas City Star*. International news filled just four pages inside the paper, a compilation of wire-service articles from the AP, Knight Ridder, and *The New York Times*.

But when the journalistic landscape shifted on September 11, it was the ability of Knight Ridder to go global that proved so helpful to the *Star*. On a few big stories in the past,

The Dallas Morning News

WEATHERING THE CRITICS



Three days after three suicide bombers killed twenty-five Israelis and injured almost two hundred more, President George W. Bush went after a Texas-based Islamic charity suspected of funding the group that claimed responsibility for the bombings. " Hamas has obtained much of the money that it pays for murder abroad right here in the United States," Bush said from the White House's Rose Garden on December 4. "Money originally raised by the Holy Land Foundation." He announced that the administration had seized the assets of the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development. The decision capped an eight-year investigation of the group by the

FBI, which charged that Holy Land money went to compensate the families of suicide bombers.

The announcement was also a vindication of sorts for *The Dallas Morning News*, which had published a controversial series of stories since 1996 about the investigation into the country's largest Muslim charity.

The Holy Land Foundation first came to the *Morning News's* attention five years ago when Israel outlawed it and seized all its local assets, claiming that it funneled money to Hamas. The editors sent Steve McGonigle, a twenty-one-year veteran, to nearby Richardson to look into the group.

McGonigle found some troubling connections between Holy Land and Hamas, and over the next few years, he continued to report on the charity as the government examined and reexamined its activities. He reported that the FBI and the Treasury Department had been investigating the foundation almost since the ban by Israel, and that the government, having been frustrated by a lack of progress against the group, deported four immigrant employees who were said to have lied to obtain special work visas. His stories also raised questions about the connections of Mousa Abu Marzook, the political leader of Hamas, to Holy Land. In early 2001, the *Morning News* ran a few stories about an Internet company that was located across the street from Holy Land and whose officers had very close business and familial connections to the charity. The FBI suspected it of illegally shipping computer technology to Libya and Syria.

Local Muslim groups were angered by McGonigle's series and what they called the paper's "biased coverage" of Holy Land. " *Dallas Morning News* is a mouthpiece for Israel," read the banners at an April 1996 protest by a group that called itself Muslims Against Defamation. "When they first started, there would be three or four hundred people out there car-

rying signs that were very personal about one of the reporters," says Pam Maples, the editor who worked with McGonigle on the later Holy Land stories. Some protest supporters created a Web site, DallasNotNews.com, to launch criticisms of the newspaper. It included photos of McGonigle that labeled him "Public Enemy Number One," she says. The first round of protests died down after less than a year, but they flared up again in 2000, when McGonigle followed up with more stories on Holy Land. The local chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations joined in organizing the second round of protests. In April 2000, Holy Land sued the paper for defamation, but dropped the suit after the December seizure. Representatives from the Council on American-Islamic Relations and Holy Land did not respond to requests for comment, but have said in the past that the foundation aids the families of Palestinians jailed, killed, or deported by Israel but does not fund Hamas or terrorist activities.

The editors say they remained receptive to protesters' claims, and wanted to reassure local Muslims that they were investigating a group, not a religion. "The newspaper has had a series of meetings with a broad base of Muslims in this area," Maples says. But through it all, *The Dallas Morning News* remained confident of the accuracy of McGonigle's reporting, she says.

Even one of the *Morning News's* usual critics praised the stories. "By and large, I'd say that these are good, solid reports," says Eric Celeste, an editor who writes a media column called "Filler" for the *Dallas Observer*, a free weekly paper. "They've really been out in front in showing how these groups are funded." — J.G.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

FRIDAY, NOV. 9, 2001

ajc.com

HAVE BEARD, WILL TRAVEL

When metro reporter Mark Bixler got the internal memo that asked for volunteers for *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* new international "Go Team," he jumped at the chance to fly around the world to report a story at a moment's notice, and began to make preparations. Passport in order? Check. Up to date on immunizations? Check. Break news to — and ask for understanding from — new girlfriend? Check. Grow beard? Check. He was set.

Bixler wasn't the only "Go Team" member with facial hair foresight — editor Bill Steiden also stopped shaving. Steiden and Bixler don't think growing a beard will fool anyone, but friends and colleagues who had been to the region told them beards made fitting in a bit easier.

But Bixler's eagerness to change jobs, meanwhile, mirrors the *Journal-Constitution's* willingness to change its structure to meet the demands of the Big Story. A week after the attacks on New York and Washington, senior editors met and reorganized the newsroom staff. They formed a new "Crisis Team," composed of three smaller teams, each focused on one aspect of the conflict. Keith Graham, who was the world editor, steers the general terrorism coverage. Bill Sanders, who was a metro editor, manages the reporting on homeland defense



and the military. Michele Foust left her assignment as aviation editor to oversee economic coverage. And Scott Thurston came from the business desk to direct the aviation-related coverage. The Crisis Team also runs two "Go Teams" — one domestic, one international. These are groups of reporters who are ready to fly off and cover big developments as they spring up.

The shifts came on the heels of another reorganization last summer, when the then-new managing editor Julia Wallace cut the number of editors, re-thought some beats, and re-assigned 20 percent of the staff to new or newly configured positions. "We

needed to: number one, build expertise, number two, devote resources to it, number three, coordinate it," Wallace says. "We understood that we have a different landscape that we have to cover. We made those changes not knowing how long we'd have to make them for." She credits the reorganization with allowing the *Journal-Constitution* to get more in-depth stories about the conflict than it might otherwise have been able to get. For example, Wallace says that the new structure allowed them to more aggressively cover the Centers for Disease Control, and to supply the Cox chain with an important aspect of their national coverage.

The *Journal-Constitution* has no full-time foreign correspondents (it uses foreign stories reported by Cox correspondents), but five reporters were dispatched on a staggered basis to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Bixler went to Egypt to report on a joint Egyptian-American military exercise and to assess the Egyptian take on the war. When, on November 12, American Airlines Flight 587 crashed in the Rockaways, in New York City, members of the domestic "Go Team" were soon on a plane to New York to report on the latest aviation disaster, which was first suspected to be linked to terrorism. Wallace says the speed and size of that mobilization would have been impossible before the reorganization.

At least some of the editors at the *Journal-Constitution* think that, while the current structure won't remain in place indefinitely, the paper has experienced a re-awakening to the importance of hard news, both domestic and international. "My sense is that we're going to be interested in trying to maintain a level of explanatory journalism for quite a while," says Bert Roughton, Jr., who left his post as the growth and development editor to head the Crisis Team. "I think it's been an exercise in broadening everyone's horizons somewhat, and I think it will stick."

— J.G.

The Miami Herald

SPREADING THE HERALD THIN

It is both a blessing and a curse for *The Miami Herald* that the eyes of the country have been so frequently focused on South Florida lately. First, there was a little boy named Elián, then came last year's election debacle.

But those were just a prelude. In the days after the attacks, when it was learned that Mohammed Atta and his posse lived and learned how to fly airplanes in the region, the national media swarmed once again to the *Herald's* backyard. And when the first case of anthrax was discovered at a publishing company in Boca Raton, it was as if the story were playing out according to some absurd script. Here was an area of the country with more strange events than all the Maines of Stephen King's nightmares. "We've sort of been in news hell, if you will, since Thanksgiving of 1999," says Mark Seibel, the managing editor.

But the *Herald's* experience scrambling for leads on a national story in an environment cluttered with competitors served the paper well. Twenty reporters — nearly the entire metro staff — fanned out across South Florida in a mad zig-zag with competing journalists and federal investigators. "We have good sources, a good CAR team, and, with Florida's public records laws, we were able to get access to information that helped us find some of these guys," says David Wilson, the night assistant managing editor. For instance, it was the *Herald* that broke the story about Mohammed Atta's night of drunken belligerence at the Shuckums, a Polynesian-themed bar in Hollywood, in Broward County. "We knew Mohammed Atta's movements and were able to put much of that together. They were living in Hollywood and Daytona and going to school there," Seibel says.

When the Florida legislature recently debated an attempt to weaken Florida's famously strong sunshine laws in light of the way details about the terror investigation were reported on, "one of the things they cited," Wilson says, "was that, oft times, reporters were beating investigators to suspects."

Meeting the challenges of the big stories has come at a price that can't be measured on the balance sheet. Some other, less explosive, stories fell through the cracks. "During the pursuit of local angles on the hijackings, somewhere in there the county commission approved the purchase of touch-screen voting machines," Seibel says. "We missed it, and we only reported it a couple weeks late. That was last year's big story, and we couldn't keep track of it, so we do have a resource crunch."

In the last couple of years, Seibel says, ten city-desk reporters have lost their jobs because of Knight Ridder cutbacks. During that same period, Knight Ridder reported a profit margin of just over 20 percent in 2000, up from 13.6 percent in 1991.

But despite the cutbacks, staffers remain committed to doing the best job possible with the resources available. "This is a big-story place," Wilson says. "Whether it's a hurricane or a crooked mayoral election. It's one of the things that makes doing daily journalism in South Florida so challenging and so interesting. And we're used to it."

— J.G.

THE SUN

COVERING FOR MARYLAND

Since September 11, a platoon of Baltimore *Sun* reporters has roamed through conflict-weary Afghan villages and impoverished Pakistani towns, covering the war for their Maryland readers. Dan Fesperman interviewed Afghan exiles living in Pakistan, anxious about returning to their liberated homeland. John Murphy wrote about child labor among the Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Frank Langfitt profiled a Pakistani Islamic school that preaches militant fundamentalism. Will Englund penned a piece about his visit to Kunduz and an unexpected encounter with a Taliban soldier.

For most U.S. dailies with 300,000 circulation, such an effort would be extraordinary. But the *Sun's* commitment to global coverage has long been a central part of the paper's mission. While the media scaled back foreign coverage over the last twenty years — citing high costs and a lack of reader interest — the *Sun* maintained five full-time correspondents normally stationed in London, Jerusalem, Johannes-

THE SUN DEVASTATION



burg, Moscow, and Beijing. "The editors here know that covering city hall is important," says foreign editor Robert Ruby. "But they've known that covering the world is also something a paper should do."

Another reason the *Sun* devotes so much money and resources to international coverage is the competitive market in which it operates. "Most papers our size don't have to compete

with *The Washington Post*," says Tony Barbieri, the *Sun's* managing editor. "We can't go to our readers with anything less than a complete newspaper. We have to be as good as we can possibly be."

Conventional wisdom has it that readers don't care about foreign news. Barbieri disagrees. A former foreign correspondent for the *Sun*, he believes that readers are interested in events overseas as long as those foreign people and places are covered in the same thoughtful, analytical, and creative way that journalists cover news at home. — J.L.

The Boston Globe

BARON'S MOMENT

In choosing a successor to editor Matthew V. Storrin, *Boston Globe* publisher Richard Gilman broke tradition and hired from outside the paper's own ranks. Gilman selected Marty Baron, the forty-six-year-old executive editor of *The Miami Herald*, who in his eighteen months at the helm in South Florida earned sterling reviews. *Editor & Publisher* had named him editor of the year in April 2001. Within six weeks of assuming his new post in Boston, those celebrated credentials were tested.

Baron responded to the chain of events that began on September 11 by mobilizing his new employees to report on every dimension of the story. Education editor Marilyn Garateix oversaw the writing of obituaries for the Boston residents killed on the hijacked airplanes. Neil Swidey and Marcella Bombardieri interviewed Abdullah Mohammed Binladin, Osama bin Laden's brother, who lives in Boston. The science and health reporters investigated the anthrax attacks. The Hong Kong and Canada correspondents went to Pakistan, while other reporters were sent to Europe.

"He imposed a sense of discipline, really making sure everything got covered," says David Beard, a suburban editor, of Baron. "It was a chance for him to direct."

Beard says that *Globe* readers were especially frustrated by the failed security at Logan International Airport, where hijackers boarded the two planes that crashed into the World



Trade Center. The *Globe* responded with a series of articles that exposed the inept security at Logan: the low-wage, poorly trained security guards; the X-ray machines that routinely failed to detect weapons; the lack of professionalism among airport personnel. As a result of those reports, the executive director of the Massachusetts Port Authority resigned and the security chief at Logan was demoted.

Readers noticed this aggressive reporting, and daily circulation rose in October by 30,000 copies. More important, Baron's handling of the paper bolstered the relationship between the new editor and his staff. "I think one of the things you realize is how focused a leader he is," says Swidey, the Sunday metro editor. "What September 11 did was allow everyone to see how important it was to have someone with that focus, someone capable of harnessing all of the talent in the newsroom."

Baron felt some scrutiny when he first stepped into the *Globe's* newsroom. "I knew the staff was looking at me, seeing whether the *Globe* had selected the right editor," he says. The September 11 attack eased that transition. Reporters learned to trust Baron, and he says he learned to believe in them. "I think we've got a very capable staff that can react extremely well to a news story from many different angles."

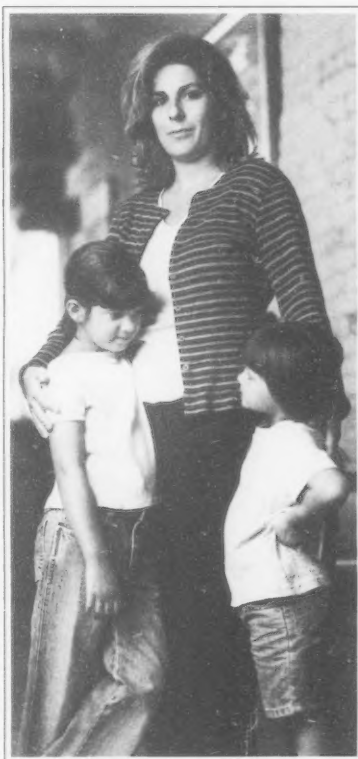
— J.L.


Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt





Reading is a great way to escape. It helped this family get out of the projects.

To families living in poverty, it sometimes seems there's no way out. And for many of them, poor literacy skills are the source of their own captivity. Today, one in every five people in America would have difficulty understanding these very words. A parent who can't read a job application can't earn a living. A child who fails in school doesn't earn a diploma. Entire generations become trapped in a bleak pattern



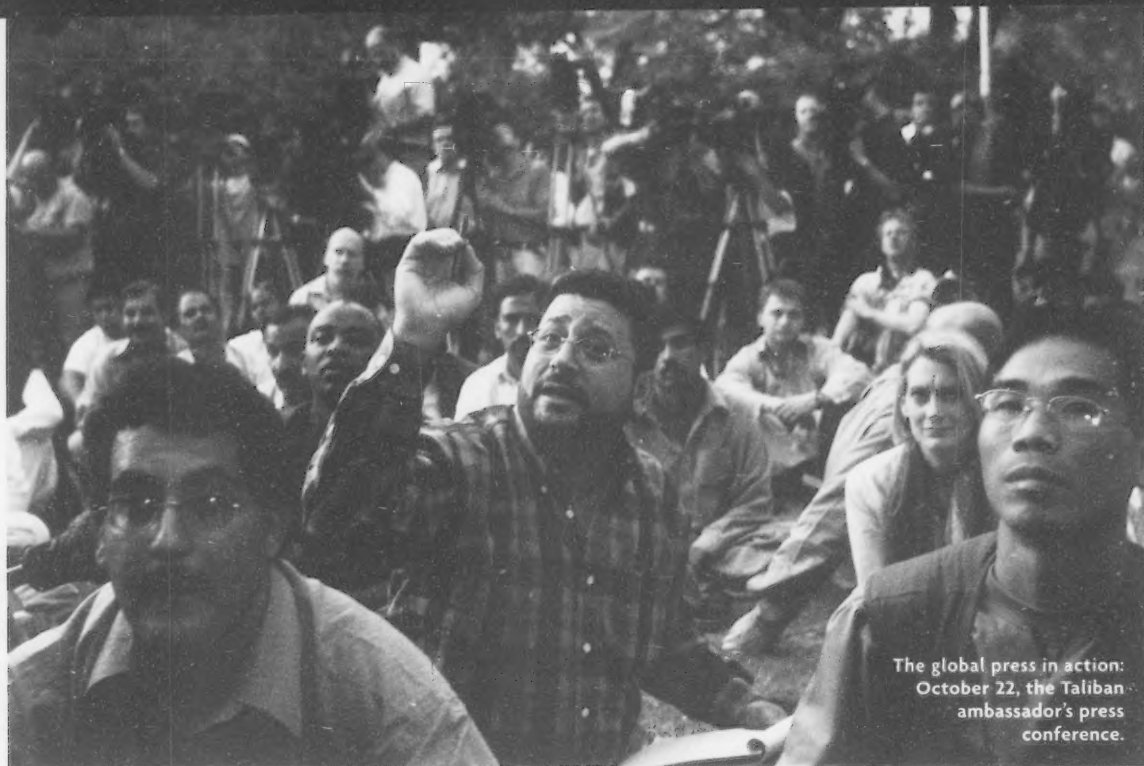
of underachievement and need. Their only escape is through the classroom door.  The National Center for Family Literacy is working to help break the cycle of intergenerational poverty by teaching parents and

their children the skills necessary for success. Family members learn to read and write well, to maintain good study habits, to hold a steady job. They learn how to manage a household budget and to plan for the future. We hold out a hand and they learn to pull themselves up.  We need a hand as well. You can volunteer to participate in a family literacy program. You can offer someone a job. Or you can

simply write out a check. Whatever choice you make, you can be the reason one more family succeeds and poverty fails.  Please call the Family Literacy InfoLine at 1-877-FAMLIT-1 or visit www.famlit.org.

NATIONAL CENTER *for* FAMILY LITERACY

Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz



The global press in action:
October 22, the Taliban
ambassador's press
conference.

ROBERT NICKESBERG/GETTY IMAGES

Foreign News: What's Next?

Past Failures, Future Promises

BY MICHAEL PARKS

American newspapers have carried more stories about Afghanistan on page one in the four months since the September 11 attacks than in the previous four decades. Network news programs that examined, almost nightly, a California congressman's relationship with a missing female intern were now offering hour-long specials on Osama bin Laden. Newsmagazines that for years had hesitated to put a foreign story on the cover, knowing that it would likely mean a drop of 25 percent or more in newsstand sales, ran cover

stories week after week on the attacks, the hunt for bin Laden, the threat of biological terrorism, and the U.S. counter-attack in Afghanistan. What had seemed foreign and far away was suddenly frightening, and of intense interest to readers.

Much of the coverage of the terrorist attacks and the U.S. response has been American journalism at its best. But many news organizations were playing catch-up. The terrorist threat from radical Islamic fundamentalists had been clear for years — attacks on the World Trade Center in 1993, on apartments housing U.S. Air Force personnel in Saudi Arabia in 1996, on the U.S. em-

bassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and on the U.S.S. *Cole* in the Yemeni port of Aden in 2000. Coverage of these attacks was largely episodic with limited investigative reporting and few follow-up stories even when participants were brought to trial.

The failure was sweeping. "We did not examine the country's anti-terrorism efforts adequately, our intelligence capabilities, our immigration policies, or the reasons for anti-Americanism," says Edward Seaton, editor-in-chief of the *Manhattan* (Kansas) *Mercury*, former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, and an ardent advocate of more international coverage. "While we can de-

HARD NUMBERS: OVERSEAS BUREAUS

Whether it was Ernest Hemingway covering the Spanish Civil War or Joel McCrae playing the lead in the movie *Foreign Correspondent*, overseas reporting has been a prestige assignment.

A Pulitzer Prize category was established in 1929. The first winner was Paul Scott Mowrer of the *Chicago Daily News*. And during World War II hundreds of correspondents went overseas with the troops.

Most of them came home but a sizeable presence remained, particularly in Europe and in Japan, covering the occupation. But in the Sixties, with the advent of television, the Vietnam war, and the cold war, several news organizations developed global bureaus. A couple of decades later as the cold war ended and public interest faded, some organizations cut back.

The September 11 terror attacks and the subsequent war in Afghanistan brought a flood of correspondents to Central Asia. The big news organizations added half a dozen to a dozen (CNN sent seventeen), largely bringing in people from other bureaus or domestic staff, many of whom are now returning to other assignments. Few permanent staff additions are expected.

The chart below shows, as of September 1, the number of bureaus and the approximate number of correspondents for major American news outlets.

This material was researched by Nicholas Bender with assistance from John Giuffo. Numbers are based on company estimates.

Name	Bureaus	Correspondents	Comments
Associated Press	100	150	Approximate numbers
New York Times	26	40	Opening a bureau in Islamabad.
Los Angeles Times	21	26	} Times-Post reports are available to more than 300 U.S. news organizations through L.A. Times-Washington Post News Service.
Washington Post	20	26	
Knight Ridder	14	14	} Some report company-wide; some to individual papers
USA Today	4	4	
Time	17	19	} Does not include the staff of international editions.
Newsweek	11	16	
CNN	30	55	Cuts scheduled to take place were canceled after September 11.
CBS	4	9	} All three networks base most correspondents in London.
NBC	5	8	
ABC	6	7	
Fox	6	6	Half a dozen covered Afghan war, including Geraldo.
Wall Street Journal	40	119	Includes Asian and European edition staffs.

Regional papers with five or more bureaus: Chicago Tribune (10), Newsday (5), Dallas News (5), Baltimore Sun (5), Boston Globe (5)

bate whether this failure played a role in our national lack of preparedness, there is no question that we failed our readers."

Bill Wheatley, vice president of NBC News, is also self-critical. "We all have done a good job since September 11," he says, "but I and a lot of others wish we had done more to help the public understand the intensity of feelings, the anger, among the radical Islamic fundamentalists."

News executives were significantly out of touch with their communities. Most Americans, even before the attacks, had concluded that global terrorism was the country's greatest international concern. In a 2001 study by the Pew Research Center and the Council on Foreign Relations conducted before September 11, the public ranked protecting the United States from terrorist attacks as the country's top

foreign policy priority. In 1999, a similar survey by The Gallup Organization for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations found that more Americans (53 percent to 40 percent) thought that the twenty-first century would be even bloodier than the twentieth. When the U.S. Commission on National Security, chaired by former Senators Gary Hart and Warren Rudman, reported last January that international terrorism threatened the United States directly and that "Americans will likely die on American soil, possibly in large numbers," few news organizations covered it (CJR, November/December 2001).

Even with the surge of coverage over the past four months, many stories have remained thinly reported. "Few of us understand, for example," says Robert Rivard, editor of the *San Antonio Ex-*

press-News, "how it is that our intelligence agencies have maintained ties with Pakistani intelligence agencies at the same time those same Pakistani agencies helped the Taliban consolidate power and build an alliance with Al Qaeda."

LEVELS OF INTEREST

Simply put, most news organizations failed to cover what a substantial number of their readers and viewers believed was vitally important — the danger posed to the United States by global terrorism. News organizations were guilty of the same lack of judgment and neglect of duty for which editorial writers have rebuked the Central Intelligence Agency and other government institutions.

The question now is whether the

THE PRESS SHINES AT A DARK MOMENT

BY ANDREW KOHUT

The American public's strongly positive reaction to news coverage of the events of September 11 and the subsequent war on terrorism here and abroad reflects a number of important lessons learned over the years about the relationship between the people and the press. First and foremost, it shows that the public's need to know trumps everything else. It not only drives public attentiveness to the news, it also shapes evaluations of media performance.

A number of signs in the Pew Research Center surveys taken after September 11 point to a clear link between liking the coverage and needing the content. When the 85 percent of PRC respondents who rated terrorism coverage excellent or good in early October were asked why, "timeliness," "comprehensiveness," and "informativeness" were the reasons most often volunteered. This same survey showed that people who were most worried about the prospects of more terrorism were more positive about the quality of the news coverage than those who were less worried. (See chart 1). In that same vein, our polling also found that as the public's worries and fears declined over the course of the autumn, so did extremely positive ratings of the press's terrorism coverage (see chart 2).

But need-to-know alone does not explain people's positive view of news media performance. Lack of widespread disagreement about public policy, and low partisanship since September 11, undoubtedly play supporting roles in citizens' liking the way the media handled the story. Few respondents, if any, fault coverage of the terrorist attacks for being biased, too negative, or too sensational. Those are usually the predominant criticisms of the press in ordinary times. Also, surprisingly, our polling did not find the usual partisan pattern in opinions about media bias. Republicans were not more critical than others. They were, in fact, more positive than Democrats in two out of three of our post-September 11 surveys.

CHART 1

TERRORISM WORRIES

*The more people fear terror,
the more they like the news*

	Very Worried %	Some- what %	Not at all %
Excellent	54	48	41
Good	31	40	39
Only Fair	9	9	13
Poor	2	2	4
Don't know	4	1	3
	100	100	100

Reactions to the coverage also underscore the fact that when there is real news, as opposed to media-fueled national melodramas, there can't be too much of it from the public's point of view. Two and a half weeks after the attacks, 63 percent still felt the amount of coverage was appropriate, while only 32 percent believed the story was being over-covered. This is a very unusual response to a story that gets wall-to-wall treatment. Had this question been asked only a few months earlier about Chandra Levy and Congressman Gary

Condit, there is little doubt that most survey participants would have complained about too much coverage of a story — just as they had about the endless reporting on the deaths of John F. Kennedy Jr. and Princess Diana, the Clinton-Lewinski scandal, and the O.J. Simpson trial.

At the same time, even in a crisis, the public is quick to criticize when the press steps over the line. A nationwide Fox news poll of Oct 17-18 found a 56 percent majority believing that news organizations were over-hyping coverage of anthrax cases, compared to 35 percent who saw them as acting responsibly.

More broadly, surveys of reactions to the coverage further discredit "shoot the messenger" explanations of why the public has not liked press coverage in recent years. Fully 77 percent of Pew's respondents in a survey conducted just after the attacks said that the coverage frightened them; 92 percent said it saddened them, and 45 percent said it tired them out. Yet these were the same people who for the most part had only good things to say about the quality of the news coverage.

Pew's surveys over this period also reinforced our findings about the growing primacy of cable news. With all news formats covering the same story, cable news won the largest audience and earned the most credit. Nine in ten Americans in a survey conducted days after the September attacks said they got most of their news from television. But a 45 percent plurality cited cable TV versus 30 percent for network TV and 17 percent for local TV. Just 11 percent cited newspapers, 14 percent radio, and 5 percent the Internet. When asked who did the best job of reporting the story, cable news networks, led by CNN, were cited by 42 percent while broadcast networks, led by ABC, were named by 32 percent.

Although the public primarily turned to TV for news about the attacks, half the respondents told us they also were reading newspapers more closely, and about a third were checking the Internet more often than before September 11. Surprisingly, younger people — 18-29 year-olds — were

CHART 2

AS FEARS EBB, SO DO RATINGS

*Worried about becoming
a victim of terrorism?*

	Late Sept %	Mid Oct %	Early Nov %	Change Sept-Nov
Very/Somewhat	53	50	40	-13
Not too/at all	46	48	59	+13
Don't know	1	2	1	0
	100	100	100	

Rating press coverage of the attacks

	Mid Sept %	Early Oct %	Mid Oct %	Change Sept-Oct
Excellent	56	48	32	-24
Good	33	37	42	+9
Only fair	6	10	17	+11
Poor	3	3	6	+3
Don't know	2	2	3	+1
	100	100	100	

CHART 3

CABLE ON TOP

	Mid-Sept 2001 %	Mid-Nov 2001 %
Cable news	45	53
Network TV news	30	17
Local TV news	17	18
Radio	14	19
Newspapers	11	34
Magazines	*	2
Internet	5	13
Other	3	3
Don't Know	3	1

How have you been getting most of your news about terrorism? From television, newspapers, radio, magazines or Internet? (Some cited more than one choice.)

strikingly more likely to report increased newspaper readership than those 30 and older (59 percent vs. 48 percent).

Over the course of the fall the public increasingly looked to news sources other than television for coverage of the war on terrorism both at home and abroad. A mid-November survey found the number relying mostly on newspapers tripling (from 11 percent to 34 percent) since the week of the attacks. Similarly, use of Internet news sites climbed from 5 percent to 13 percent over that period. In fact, among under-30s the Internet (at 20 percent) rivaled newspapers (24 percent), radio (24 percent), and local TV news (19 percent) for news about terrorism. Cable was the top choice of younger people with 55 percent naming it, while network news was cited by the smallest number as a main source of terror news (14 percent).

The "who" and the "how" of the story of the attacks were the most compelling components of the news for American audiences of all ages. Fully 72 percent followed this aspect of the story very closely — which was even more than the 57 percent highly interested in news about efforts to

provide protection against further attacks, and the 52 percent very interested in news about military actions.

Whether the strong interest in terrorism will lead Americans to increased interest in news once the crisis passes is as much an open question as whether the good feeling the public has about the media's performance will improve its credibility in the long run. A mid-November survey by the PRC hinted that the answer to both questions may be yes. That poll showed a major increase in favorable opinions of the press for accuracy of reporting, professionalism, morality, patriotism, and caring about the people it covers. Sixty-six percent of respondents said they were now more generally interested in the news than they were before September 11. This is appreciably higher than the 49 percent who expressed increased interest in the news following the gulf war.

Interest in international news was certainly not buoyed by the intense news consumption during the brief gulf war. In fact, the 90s were just the opposite — an age of indifference. The war on terrorism may well be different because the public may feel vulnerable for a long time. As the fall months passed, however, there were indications of familiar patterns of disengagement by some segments of the news audience who have been most problematic. Specifically, while younger people continued expressing strong overall interest in news about terrorism, they were much more disengaged than older audience segments when it came to attentiveness to news of the military campaign, anthrax attacks, and the intense debate in Washington about how to improve airline security.

The course of the war on terrorism will obviously dictate whether we are on the verge of a revival of interest in serious news. The conduct of the media will determine whether their commendable performance at a time of national crisis will have an enduring positive impact on their long-standing credibility problems.

Andrew Kohut is director of the Pew Research Center.

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"The test is not what we or *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal* or the *Los Angeles Times* does," says Leonard Downie, executive editor of *The Washington Post*. "We are committed to national and foreign coverage and will remain so. The big question is what the large ownerships will do — the networks and the chains — and I'm skeptical they will change. They put foreign news at the bottom of their priorities. They thought it turned audiences off and drove readers away. Will they now put public service ahead of profits?"

The first measurements of this commitment are newshole and airtime. For most U.S. newspapers, the issue is not sending correspondents overseas but committing space to international news and hiring editors knowledgeable about the world to pull together packages from news services. For most television stations, the question will be giving up a crime story or two on the evening news to make room for a longer foreign story. For the networks, it is committing correspondents, producers, crews, and time on their main news programs.

"We will be covering this story for a considerable period of time," NBC's Wheatley says. "Will there, for example, be another terrorist attack in the U.S.? We've been told this war will be long, not just against the Taliban, but against terrorists wherever they are. That will take sizable resources."

The huge costs of covering the conflict will continue, but the real financial problem for most news organizations is the decline in advertising revenues resulting from the economic downturn. "It's a tough time, but this is what we do," says Eason Jordan, chief news executive of the CNN News Group. "Our new leadership [at AOL Time Warner] fully understands and supports world coverage. We have been told we will have all the resources we need."

Paul Friedman, executive vice president of ABC News, argues that the larger issue is one of audience interest. "Coverage will in time sink down to the previous levels — as little or as much as before," he says. "I don't share the cockeyed optimism that we have all learned our lesson and will now rededicate ourselves

THE PRESS SHINES AT A DARK MOMENT

BY ANDREW KOHUT

The American public's strongly positive reaction to news coverage of the events of September 11 and the subsequent war on terrorism here and abroad reflects a number of important lessons learned over the years about the relationship between the people and the press. First and foremost, it shows that the public's need to know trumps everything else. It not only drives public attentiveness to the news, it also shapes evaluations of media performance.

A number of signs in the Pew Research Center surveys taken after September 11 point to a clear link between liking the coverage and needing the content. When the 85 percent of PRC respondents who rated terrorism coverage excellent or good in early October were asked why, "timeliness," "comprehensiveness," and "informativeness" were the reasons most often volunteered. This same survey showed that people who were most worried about the prospects of more terrorism were more positive about the quality of the news coverage than those who were less worried. (See chart 1). In that same vein, our polling also found that as the public's worries and fears declined over the course of the autumn, so did extremely positive ratings of the press's terrorism coverage (see chart 2).

But need-to-know alone does not explain people's positive view of news media performance. Lack of widespread disagreement about public policy, and low partisanship since September 11, undoubtedly play supporting roles in citizens' liking the way the media handled the story. Few respondents, if any, fault coverage of the terrorist attacks for being biased, too negative, or too sensational. Those are usually the predominant criticisms of the press in ordinary times. Also, surprisingly, our polling did not find the usual partisan pattern in opinions about media bias. Republicans were not more critical than others. They were, in fact, more positive than Democrats in two out of three of our post-September 11 surveys.

CHART 1

TERRORISM WORRIES

*The more people fear terror,
the more they like the news*

	Very Worried %	Some- what %	Not at all %
Excellent	54	48	41
Good	31	40	39
Only Fair	9	9	13
Poor	2	2	4
Don't know	4	1	3
	100	100	100

Reactions to the coverage also underscore the fact that when there is real news, as opposed to media-fueled national melodramas, there can't be too much of it from the public's point of view. Two and a half weeks after the attacks, 63 percent still felt the amount of coverage was appropriate, while only 32 percent believed the story was being over-covered. This is a very unusual response to a story that gets wall-to-wall treatment. Had this question been asked only a few months earlier about Chandra Levy and Congressman Gary

CHART 2

AS FEARS EBB, SO DO RATINGS

*Worried about becoming
a victim of terrorism?*

	Late Sept %	Mid Oct %	Early Nov %	Change Sept-Nov
Very/Somewhat	53	50	49	-13
Not too/at all	46	48	59	+13
Don't know	1	2	1	0
	100	100	100	

Rating press coverage of the attacks

	Mid Sept %	Early Oct %	Mid Oct %	Change Sept-Oct
Excellent	56	48	32	-24
Good	33	37	42	+9
Only fair	6	10	17	+11
Poor	3	3	6	+3
Don't know	2	2	3	+1
	100	100	100	

Condit, there is little doubt that most survey participants would have complained about too much coverage of a story — just as they had about the endless reporting on the deaths of John F. Kennedy Jr. and Princess Diana, the Clinton-Lewinski scandal, and the O.J. Simpson trial.

At the same time, even in a crisis, the public is quick to criticize when the press steps over the line. A nationwide Fox news poll of Oct 17-18 found a 56 percent majority believing that news organizations were over-hyping coverage of anthrax cases, compared to 35 percent who saw them as acting responsibly.

More broadly, surveys of reactions to the coverage further discredit "shoot the messenger" explanations of why the public has not liked press coverage in recent years. Fully 77 percent of Pew's respondents in a survey conducted just after the attacks said that the coverage frightened them; 92 percent said it saddened them, and 45 percent said it tired them out. Yet these were the same people who for the most part had only good things to say about the quality of the news coverage.

Pew's surveys over this period also reinforced our findings about the growing primacy of cable news. With all news formats covering the same story, cable news won the largest audience and earned the most credit. Nine in ten Americans in a survey conducted days after the September attacks said they got most of their news from television. But a 45 percent plurality cited cable TV versus 30 percent for network TV and 17 percent for local TV. Just 11 percent cited newspapers, 14 percent radio, and 5 percent the Internet. When asked who did the best job of reporting the story, cable news networks, led by CNN, were cited by 42 percent while broadcast networks, led by ABC, were named by 32 percent.

Although the public primarily turned to TV for news about the attacks, half the respondents told us they also were reading newspapers more closely, and about a third were checking the Internet more often than before September 11. Surprisingly, younger people — 18-29 year-olds — were

CHART 3

CABLE ON TOP

	Mid-Sept 2001 %	Mid-Nov 2001 %
Cable news	45	53
Network TV news	30	17
Local TV news	17	18
Radio	14	19
Newspapers	11	34
Magazines	*	2
Internet	5	13
Other	3	3
Don't Know	3	1

How have you been getting most of your news about terrorism? From television, newspapers, radio, magazines or Internet? (Some cited more than one choice.)

strikingly more likely to report increased newspaper readership than those 30 and older (59 percent vs. 48 percent).

Over the course of the fall the public increasingly looked to news sources other than television for coverage of the war on terrorism both at home and abroad. A mid-November survey found the number relying mostly on newspapers tripling (from 11 percent to 34 percent) since the week of the attacks. Similarly, use of Internet news sites climbed from 5 percent to 13 percent over that period. In fact, among under-30s the Internet (at 20 percent) rivaled newspapers (24 percent), radio (24 percent), and local TV news (19 percent) for news about terrorism. Cable was the top choice of younger people with 55 percent naming it, while network news was cited by the smallest number as a main source of terror news (14 percent).

The "who" and the "how" of the story of the attacks were the most compelling components of the news for American audiences of all ages. Fully 72 percent followed this aspect of the story very closely — which was even more than the 57 percent highly interested in news about efforts to

provide protection against further attacks, and the 52 percent very interested in news about military actions.

Whether the strong interest in terrorism will lead Americans to increased interest in news once the crisis passes is as much an open question as whether the good feeling the public has about the media's performance will improve its credibility in the long run. A mid-November survey by the PRC hinted that the answer to both questions may be yes. That poll showed a major increase in favorable opinions of the press for accuracy of reporting, professionalism, morality, patriotism, and caring about the people it covers. Sixty-six percent of respondents said they were now more generally interested in the news than they were before September 11. This is appreciably higher than the 49 percent who expressed increased interest in the news following the gulf war.

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The huge costs of covering the conflict will continue, but the real financial problem for most news organizations is the decline in advertising revenues resulting from the economic downturn. "It's a tough time, but this is what we do," says Eason Jordan, chief news executive of the CNN News Group. "Our new leadership [at AOL Time Warner] fully understands and supports world coverage. We have been told we will have all the resources we need."

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to foreign news. The interest simply isn't there, and when the impact subsides so will the interest. It's the nature of the beast."

Many news executives see the question of the public's level of interest as a test of the journalistic craft, of persuading readers and viewers to read and watch what they need to know and understand. "This is about telling important stories in interesting ways, about why the world matters," Jordan says. "It's not fair to put the onus on the people. News organizations have to take responsibility for coverage."

LOCAL VS. GLOBAL

But study after study has shown declining space and airtime devoted to international news. One recent analysis by the Newspaper Advertising Bureau estimated that, before September 11, foreign stories accounted for 2 percent or less of the average daily paper's newshole, down from 10 percent in 1971 during the Vietnam War; another estimated that the proportion of international news in the major newsweeklies had declined to 13 percent from 22 percent between 1985 and 1995. Before September 11, network newscasts on some nights had no international stories at all, though a generation ago foreign reports constituted an average of 45 percent of the newscasts.

The reduction in international coverage has brought complaints from policy analysts, who argue that the decline fueled a new isolationism in the United States and that, as a result, the country might fail to exercise appropriate leadership in the world. Celinda Lake, a Democratic pollster, told a 1997 conference on the issue: "The media cover violence, conflict, and instability abroad and little else, and have made international involvement look very undesirable." Those who described themselves to Gallup as "hardly interested" in international affairs jumped from 3 percent to 22 percent, between the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations studies in 1990 and 1998.

Ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union and with it, the cold war, Americans have felt safe within their borders. "For fifty years, Americans had been on the edge, worried about nuclear confrontation," says Kevin Klose, the chief executive of National Public Radio. "Suddenly, we felt blessed with peace. We are being very rough on ourselves when we say we just lost interest in international news."

Foreign coverage was easier during

The British Perspective

Americans' interest in the news is up, of course, since September 11, but not only in the American version of it. British news organizations have seen increased U.S. interest. For example, twenty-seven public radio stations have recently added BBC broadcasts, for a total of 283 stations in the U.S. The BBC World Service Web site now has eight times the traffic it had in August, with more than half these hits coming from the U.S. Other British news sources have experienced similar increases. The British newspaper, *The Guardian*, currently averages nearly 1.6 million American unique users on its site per month, up from 420,000 before September 11. *The Guardian* also reports increased negative and positive feedback from the U.S., with some authors receiving up to 2,000 e-mails on a single story. Similarly, *The Economist* has climbed to number ten in Barnes and Noble magazine sales ranking, up from number fourteen before the assault.

Part of this increased interest in British news is probably merely an effort to get more news, but some viewers and readers seem to be looking for an outside perspective. Ian Mayes's October 13 column in *The Guardian* includes excerpts from e-mails sent in by U.S. readers complaining of "shrill jingoism," "shallow" reporting, and "the biases" of the American press. British media are more likely to be critical of U.S. foreign policy or to report anti-American points of view. For instance, days after the attacks, *The Guardian* published stories critical of U.S. policy by Seumas Milne, Arundhati Roy, and several others. Roy says she had tried to get her work published in the U.S., but couldn't find anyone willing to run it.

— Sarah Secules

the cold war, says NBC's Wheatley, "because there were good guys and bad guys and if the bad guys got out of control there would be nuclear holocaust. Then, it got a lot more complex, and the public was less certain where American interest lay in, say, Bosnia. We did hundreds of stories on Bosnia, but few Americans are able to find it on a map or tell you what went on there."

While some news organizations were doing a commendable job reporting on global terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism, and the dangers of biological warfare, others were trimming the staffs that reported and produced such stories. After covering the cold war for half a century, the emphasis was on local news, life-style stories — and on higher rates of return for shareholders in capital markets made fiercely competitive by high-tech companies and dot-com start-ups.

"You can almost hear the discussion between the business side and the news department," says Klose. "'The cold war's over,' the business side was saying. 'Why do you need a bureau in Moscow? Why can't we centralize European coverage in London? Wouldn't you like to trade a Moscow correspondent for five more local reporters?'"

Even news organizations where the commitment to international coverage is strong were caught by the September attacks. CNN was in the midst of laying off 400 staffers, Reuters was cutting more than 1,500 positions worldwide,

The Boston Globe was going through a round of buyouts, and departing Knight Ridder executives were sharply criticizing cutbacks at the San Jose *Mercury News*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and other papers in the chain.

Over the years, newspaper executives had seized on market surveys to put new emphasis on local coverage and, they hoped, to halt declining readership, particularly among youth. The same surveys that indicate deep concern about international terrorism as a foreign policy issue also show twice as many people (generally about 60 percent) interested in local news as in foreign coverage.

There is a conundrum here, according to the *Mercury's* Seaton: If the media don't provide readers and viewers with sound international reporting, how many will know what they are missing? "I don't doubt that some publishers justify smaller newsholes for foreign stories with market surveys, and thus cut their costs," he says. "But the research we looked at showed a greater appetite for international news than editors were offering." He cites a Pew study that indicated that Americans follow international news almost as closely — just a percentage point less — as they do Washington stories. "Local has to be the priority," says Seaton, "but editors fail readers if they don't expand the readers' horizons." Seaton, whose paper has a circulation of 12,000, tries to practice what he preaches with a world news page each day, a focus page

on international issues at least twice a week, and frequent op-ed articles. But editors like Seaton have often been accused of "Afghanistanism," an ironically derisive term that in American journalism goes back more than fifty years to argue that newspapers emphasizing foreign coverage were often guilty of ignoring problems at home. Until recently, *The New York Times* was chided for having more reporters in Moscow than in Queens.

For Peter Bhatia, executive editor of the Portland *Oregonian*, there is a compelling social mission in this kind of journalism. "We need to explain how an issue that is important somewhere, even rather distant from us, is important everywhere," he says. "I hope the notion of explanation and education is catching on."

BUILDING AN APPETITE

There is, in fact, evidence of a demand for serious coverage of the world: NPR's *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* have a growing audience; *The Economist's* U.S. circulation increased 11 percent in the last year, and 66 percent over the last decade; the BBC's international radio and television newscasts are carried by an increasing number of public broadcasting stations and their Web sites.

Pew surveys show a mounting public interest in such global issues as the degradation of the environment, health and disease, food shortages, and child labor. Andrew Kohut, Pew's director, says, "Public interest is high and unmet, but that interest is less in politics and the stuff of governments than it is in, say, global warming, or hoof-and-mouth disease, or the status of women."

Amanda Bennett, editor of the *Lexington* (Kentucky) *Herald-Leader*, feels that the September 11 attacks and the U.S. response give the lie to the notion that Americans don't want international news. "Now, we see how we are connected, and have the readers' attention," she says. "The challenge to us, and we are a small paper, is, 'What is our value-added? Our added value must be the intelligence we apply to sorting, interpreting, and displaying the news.' The paper published packages on the military, political, diplomatic, and ethical implications of President Bush's declaration that he wanted bin Laden "dead or alive." It did the same with biological terrorism after the anthrax outbreaks. "We take a topic and lay out a page so we're ready when space opens," Bennett said. "News is not just reporting what happened yesterday."

Larger newspapers like the *Oregonian*,

which has a circulation of 360,000, about three times that of the *Herald-Leader*, have been able to devote more resources — sending reporters to Canada, Mexico, and Asia on stories of importance to its readers. "If coverage is tied back to the lives of our readers — if we show why it matters — there is very much a place for it," executive editor Bhatia says. He cites the *Oregonian's* Pulitzer Prize-winning articles that followed the path of potatoes from Oregon, as frozen french fries, to fast-food restaurants in Asia.

At the television networks, new technology — digital video, smaller and cheaper cameras, satellite video-phones — could bring increased coverage at lower cost. "We have relatively lightweight equipment with which we can broadcast from almost anywhere in the world as long as we can hit a satellite," says NBC's Wheatley. "The video-phone picture isn't perfect, but it's passable, and we've been doing the war in Afghanistan live. We may be able to send in a single, knowledgeable, well-trained correspondent to some stories, letting us go to more places."

For all that, argues ABC's Friedman, news organizations may never be able to do enough. "We're the people [at ABC] who originally went and interviewed bin Laden and put him on the air so Americans could see what he was about," he says. "But we can't put him on night after night, nor would we want to, though that is probably the only way he and his followers could be understood, and Americans forewarned about Al Qaeda. What we are dealing with is people's ignorance of world affairs, of geopolitics, of different cultures. We are teachers, but not the nation's primary teachers, and that's the problem."

Other editors and news directors argue that it's up to journalists to persuade people of the importance of international news. "The trick in the months and years ahead will be for U.S. newspapers to rediscover our role in bringing the world home to our readers before the next global crisis dominates the front page," says the *Express-News's* Rivard. "We have to find a way to make foreign news not only relevant to our readers but something they eagerly look for and can't get anywhere else." ■

Michael Parks, former editor of the Los Angeles Times, is the interim director of the School of Journalism at the University of Southern California. He was a foreign correspondent for twenty-five years, and won a Pulitzer Prize in 1987.

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When Boom Went Bust At the 'Country Club'



BY TODD WOODY

There's something unsettling about covering your own funeral.

A month after *The Industry Standard* abruptly ceased publication last August, I joined a group of my former colleagues from the "News-magazine of the Internet Economy" at federal bankruptcy court in San Francisco. We surrendered our lattes and company-issued cell phones at the metal detectors and filed into the twenty-third-floor courtroom overlooking the financial district. Seated like mourners in rows of pews were the *Standard's* edi-

tors, reporters, and business executives. We were there to witness one of the most successful new magazines in U.S. history being put on the auction block.

The bidding began. A year earlier when Time Inc. launched its own New Economy mag, *eCompany Now*, the *Standard's* editor-in-chief, Jonathan Weber, vowed in an e-mail to the staff to "crush them like a bug." Now we were roadkill and a Time attorney was here to pick up the *Standard's* paid subscription list for a paltry \$500,000. The opening bid for the rest of the *Standard* was \$150,000. A thought crossed my mind: I could buy the bloody magazine. "I can't believe it has come to this," murmured one of the

Standard's founding executives sitting behind me. "It's just so pathetic."

Pathetic indeed. When it was all over, International Data Group — the giant Boston tech trade publisher that was *The Standard's* majority owner — took home the magazine's assets for \$900,000 — pocket change. So there it was. A grand total of \$1.4 million for a media company that in 2000 had revenues of \$141 million. A magazine that only months earlier had won a coveted Loeb Award — the Pulitzer Prize of business journalism. A magazine whose demise occasioned an editorial tribute in *The New York Times*.

There was one person conspicuous in his absence: John Battelle, the *Standard's* charismatic thirty-five-year-old founder. Only a year earlier, Battelle audaciously predicted that by 2005 the *Standard* would become a billion-dollar company, "the Dow Jones of the twenty-first century." Yet here we were. The money gone, the big dreams dashed, some 180 people thrown out of work in one of the worst job markets in memory. It was a story *Standard* reporters had written ad nauseam as the boom went bust.

That in the end the *Standard* itself had become the coda to that story was not altogether surprising. From the beginning we were, to an extraordinarily weird degree, what we wrote. The magazine's internal dynamics — the grand ambitions, the struggle to cope with outlandish growth, the pursuit of the big bucks initial public offering, the lavish salaries, perks, and parties — mirrored the rise and fall of the Internet economy. That certainly gave the *Standard* an insider's perspective that informed its journalism as it chased the hottest business story of the decade — and a buzz that made the magazine a cultural icon in certain precincts of San Francisco, New York, Austin, and Seattle. But in this

ANNE HANESEY

case, living the story meant dying with the story.

The *Standard's* destiny to become a publishing industry phenomenon was not readily apparent on that day in April 1998 when I walked into an unsigned red brick building at 315 Pacific Avenue in San Francisco's old Barbary Coast district. The former toy warehouse was largely empty as I made my way past construction workers to interview for a reporting position. The magazine's launch was two weeks off and an air of edgy anticipation permeated the place.

Six weeks earlier I had been on a sab-batical in Australia when I received an e-mail from a friend about a new magazine that was looking for reporters. *The Internet Industry Standard*, as it was then called, would purportedly cover something called the "Internet economy." It seemed, at the time, a somewhat dubious proposition. Use of the Internet certainly was growing, but it hardly seemed substantial enough to support a weekly newsmagazine. Nevertheless, a few weeks after the *Standard's* April 27, 1998 launch, I accepted an offer to become a senior writer. At thirty-six, I was the old man of the San Francisco newsroom.

While the business side went about building the *Standard's* "brand" and "mind share" — the lingo of our "biz dev" staff was indistinguishable from that of the flacks pitching stories — the editorial side worked to break through the growing Internet hype. "I don't want to edit a trade magazine, and I don't want to edit a magazine devoted to the glorification of the digital elite," Weber wrote in an early memo to Battelle, a founding editor of *Wired*, a magazine devoted in its early days to glorifying the nascent digital elite.

Weber early on made good on his promise to produce a substantive newsmagazine. In my second month on the job, he assigned me to investigate online financial fraud, giving me several months and the freedom to "get on the plane and go" wherever the story took me. (A hallmark of the *Standard's* company culture also emerged that first summer: when I worried about leaving my newborn son



Editor Weber, left, with founder Battelle at a *Standard* soirée

and wife over a weekend to get a cheap fare to New York, my editor told me to take my family with me.)

That first year we produced a thin book that was light on advertising. We did enjoy above-average salaries and free beer on the roof deck on Fridays, but the *Standard* had yet to become what some competitors would later deride, not a little enviously, as "the country club."

Still, the magazine had clearly tapped into the zeitgeist of the times. Through foresight and no small amount of luck, Battelle had launched a weekly magazine just as the Internet was evolving from a technological curiosity into an economic powerhouse. Whole sectors of this new economy were emerging overnight. There was no online health industry to speak of in September 1998 when I met with a twenty-eight-year-old Atlanta entrepreneur about to launch his WebMD online service for doctors. Within six months, it was a full-time beat and WebMD had become a \$20 billion company after its merger with a rival.

As the summer of 1999 approached, the magazine's profile was growing as the number of Internet IPOs exploded and readers sought the latest news on the latest deals. The Friday rooftop beer bashes had become catered affairs — what other magazine had its own doorman for special occasions? — packed with Prada-clad "evangelists," "launch specialists," and other functionaries of what was called, without irony, the Internet Revolution. There was, of course, a genuine socioeconomic transformation being wrought by the Internet. It was that upheaval that we as journalists were chronicling, albeit through the relatively restricted prism of

business reporting. We suspected, though, that for the martini-swillers on the roof, the real revolution was this: money for nothing.

It became clear at the *Standard's* "Internet Summit" that summer that the company's executives were no longer content to merely provision the digital vanguard with news and booze; they wanted to play the game themselves. Like other business publications, the *Standard* had started putting on conferences to "extend" its "brand" among readers and to diversify its revenues. But this was less a confab than a giddy, glittery coming-out party for the movers and shakers of the Internet economy, not least of which was the *Standard*. The summit was held at the Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel, an opulent Mediterranean-style resort overlooking a pristine stretch of southern California beach. One image stays with me: on a bougainvillea-covered bluff outside the hotel, half a dozen blue-shirted, khaki-clad young Turks stand in a row with their backs to the spectacular view of sand and surf, jabbering on their cell phones. In the middle of it all was the *Standard's* founder. The poster boy of California new-economy cool, the perpetually tanned Battelle — known to answer the phone with "Shake it!" — was in his element, endlessly networking with the assembled venture capitalists and fellow c.e.o.s.

The messianic optimism that pervaded the summit would, in the coming months, seem, if anything, understated. The ads began flooding in as Internet startups, flush with IPO cash and venture capital, began vying for attention along with old-line tech companies seeking to

In this case, living the story meant dying with the story

show they "got it." By September, the magazine had more than doubled in size.

The *Standard*, of course, wasn't the only magazine growing fat, and competition for editorial talent became a free-for-all. Veteran journalists from high-profile publications could expect six-figure salaries (but not necessarily a desk or working phone — a hiring binge was turning 315 Pacific into a high-tech tenement). By the November 1, 1999, issue, the magazine was up to 216 pages.

Incessantly ringing phones and the ping-ping of hundreds of arriving e-mail pitches from Internet companies produced a wall of white noise in the newsroom. Each day, the mailroom dumped a new load of dot-com tchotskes — T-shirts, shot glasses, a toy monkey in a space suit — on our desks as companies tried to break through the information overload. One morning, a giant rabbit slipped past the receptionist and made it to the newsroom to hand out chocolate eggs bearing his company's logo.

For the magazine's veteran journalists, accustomed to banging on the doors of people who expressly did not want their story told, the unrelenting flack attacks and rock-star treatment constituted a disconcerting role reversal. Some worried that cub reporters would grow used to having "news" spoon-fed to them from sycophantic sources who hobnobbed with the magazine's business executives. Weber began sending out periodic e-mails cautioning reporters not to get too close to the story. Adding to that challenge: a ravenous copy beast that grew hungrier with each ad-bloated issue. The *Standard* then was woefully understaffed on editors, who worked eighty-hour weeks to move stories. Needless to say, not all the stories lived up to the *Standard's* marketing slogan of "99.9 percent hype-free."

But most did. The free-wheeling, give-it-a-go ethos of the *Standard* and the no-questions-asked expense accounts gave the magazine's reporters license to pursue the unfolding narrative of the Internet boom wherever the story took them. I spent one month flying from city to city to report an in-depth feature on Ivy League schools that went into business with an online education company associated with the financier Michael Milken. A few weeks later it was back on the plane to document how information technology was transforming genetic science and the drug industry.

The opportunity to do such work, free

of corporate penny-pinching and with a minimum of newsroom politics, had begun to attract reporters and editors from *The Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*, and *The Washington Post*. Of course, the generous salaries were no small lure. As the good times rolled on, management bestowed such dot-com goodies as massages, gym memberships, and subsidized childcare. In this new California Gold Rush, it was not out of place to return to the office from a day of reporting, get a massage, and walk into the newsroom to find the editor-in-chief handing out four-figure bonus checks to celebrate a profitable quarter. Reporters, myself included, grew accustomed to jetting around the country, staying at hip hotels, and dining at chi-chi restaurants. If we ourselves weren't awash in dot-com millions, our reporting life-style offered a reasonable facsimile. "You don't know how good you have it," James Fallows, the *Atlantic* correspondent and *Standard* columnist, told us in wry understatement as we sipped a fine California Merlot at a January 2000 editorial-retreat-ski-holiday in Lake Tahoe.

But there was one perk I wish we had never received: stock options. The thud of those packets of potential riches landing on our desks was, in my opinion, the death knell of the magazine. Like the companies we covered, the *Standard* wanted to turn its cachet into IPO cash. That strategy would dictate an unsustainable spending spree to position the *Standard* as a diversified global "infor-

mation services" company. If you wanted to justify a double-digit share price, simply publishing a profitable magazine wasn't going to cut it.

There were reasonable arguments to be made for going public. Unlike nearly all of the companies the *Standard* wrote about, we were profitable despite our profligate ways. An IPO would free the company of IDG, the stodgy trade publisher that owned the magazine. And then there was the unspoken, if no less compelling, subtext: a successful IPO would make the *Standard's* top executives very, very rich while giving the rank and file perhaps a down payment for one of those \$600,000 San Francisco condos. In January 2000, Standard Media sold 15 percent of the company to venture capitalists for \$30 million. There was no turning back now. The *Standard's* new owners would demand an "exit strategy" in the form of an IPO or sale.

By April, the magazine was running as many as 360 pages a week. Then came the Nasdaq Internet stock market crash. THE END OF THE BEGINNING declared the April 17, 2000, cover. "Many startups must now scramble to change their business models," warned senior writer Jonathan Rabinovitz. THE PARTY'S OVER acknowledged a headline in the following week's *Standard* as the great Internet bubble finally burst.

While the Nasdaq burned, the *Standard* partied like it was 1999. If the magazine's business executives were reading



Power partying at one of the *Standard's* legendary rooftop bashes

STACEY R. FOREMAN

their own magazine, you wouldn't know it from the second anniversary bash the company threw on April 27, 2000, at San Francisco city hall. Even given the license of the times, it was over the top, a celebration of fin-de-siecle Internet-age excess. As bands played in both wings of the majestic beaux-arts building, thousands of invited guests lined up double deep at the martini bars and oyster bays, nibbling sushi on the grand staircase.

Over the spring and summer of 2000, the magazine continued to chronicle the downturn with cover stories like "IPO Market Unravels" and "Pink Slips in Paradise." The *Standard* began to hit its stride as disintegrating dot-coms — leaving lawsuits and disgruntled employees in their wake — provided fodder for some of the magazine's best journalism. Reporter Dan Goodin spent months of dogged investigative reporting to tell the inside story of Pixelon, a digital video company founded by a convicted con man.

It was a redemption of sorts. During the boom, we often wrote about Internet companies' grand plans and predictions. We scoured financial documents and did our best to point out hype, but often felt like shills. Now, however, we had sources who did not bring p.r. entourage to meetings and who most certainly did not want to see their names in the magazine. There were legal papers, liens, and property records to be unearthed in county courthouses; it was necessary to train some staffers on the art of locating information that didn't come out of the box on their desks.

The disconnect between what we wrote as journalists and did as a company grew by the month. April's Nasdaq debacle didn't delay hiring for a monthly spin-off magazine called *Grok*, which would debut in September. Despite the stock market chaos, the *Standard* remained fat throughout the summer and so did expectations. Plans to launch a European edition proceeded apace. Although an IPO now looked less imminent, the company continued to spend untold millions of dollars to create an independent financial infrastructure, duplicating the payroll, accounting, and personnel systems managed for the *Standard* by IDG. Hiring continued and there were nearly 500 people on the payroll.

By the fall of 2000, Battelle and the

Standard's leadership were not just drinking the Kool-Aid; they were mainlining the stuff. At a staff meeting, Battelle sat on a stage in a hotel ballroom where several hundred *Standard* staffers had gathered. Behind him a large screen read "BHAG (Big Hairy Audacious Goal)." He launched into his spiel about how *Standard Media International* would become a billion-dollar-a-year, 900-employee company within five years. Battelle reached an evangelical pitch when he revealed the key to achieving this astonishing scenario: CRM. Customer relationship management. Through an elaborate software program, the *Standard* would track our "customers'" needs and desires and sell them an array of products and services — conferences, newsletters, a job bank, market reports. Battelle hardly mentioned the magazine, though it contributed some 80 percent of the company's revenues that year. I listened in vain for the word "journalism."

That fall, the slowdown began to hit home. As the *Standard* launched a European edition in October, *Grok*, the new spin-off magazine, was faltering and would be shut down shortly. When I became a senior editor for the magazine's Policy & Politics section in October, I was told to hire additional reporters. Within weeks those plans were shelved. Around the time of the December 11, 2000, issue — ENGINE TROUBLE: IS THE TECH-DRIVEN ECONOMIC BOOM FLAMING OUT? — layoff rumors began circulating. In January, the *Standard* fired three dozen business-side staffers.

That month at the annual editorial retreat, Battelle vowed that "things would have to get pretty bad" before the ax would touch the newsroom. Things did. In February, eighteen editorial staffers lost their jobs. STOP WHINING! WHY THESE BAD TIMES LOOK PRETTY GOOD admonished the cover story that appeared a couple of weeks later. That was wishful thinking. By March, the tech advertising meltdown had reduced the magazine to 112 pages, down from 264 in December. The page count had fallen to 80 by April when the European edition was shut down, six months after its launch.

And so it went. Another round of layoffs hit in June. The magazine's coverage dovetailed with its struggle to survive. DESPERATION FINANCE: WHAT TO DO WHEN

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That fall, the slowdown began to hit home

THE BANK (AND EVERYONE ELSE) SAYS NO read the June 18 cover. A few weeks later Weber informed the editors that *The Standard* was about broke and seeking new financing. SEVERANCE: WHO GETS WHAT IN THE LAYOFF PAYOFF was a cover line on the July 2 issue as we were told that another round of layoffs was imminent.

Management hinted week after week that a deal to save the *Standard* was nearing completion. The magazine's final two issues telegraphed some of the obstacles to such a happy ending. CRM MONEY PIT: SHOULD YOU PAY THE PRICE? was the cover line for an August 6 story on the failure of customer relationship management software to live up to its billing. CRM, of course, was Battelle's holy grail and the *Standard* owed millions of dollars to license such software. The August 20 issue highlighted an even deeper money pit. REAL ESTATE MESS, read a cover line, THE LEGACY OF OUTRAGEOUS LEASES. Battelle really did believe the *Standard* would soon employ nearly a thousand people and the company reportedly had signed some tens of millions of dollars' worth of leases at the height of the insane San Francisco real-estate boom. Any would-be savior would assume those not-insignificant liabilities. Attempts to impose financial dis-

cipline on a company that never much bothered to budget were too little too late. A tighter travel budget finally had been imposed on the newsroom in late March. But it wasn't until August that anyone bothered to review cell-phone use in a company where everyone was issued a phone.

Finally, on August 16, IDG pulled the plug after its executives and the *Standard's* leaders and their VC backers failed to agree on the terms of a new round of financing. A line on the magazine's last cover said it all: THE PARTY'S OVER. NOW THE BLAME GAME BEGINS.

The final issue of the *Standard* did not look like that of a dying magazine, and therein lies the sadness and anger many of us felt at what we considered to be its needless death. Volume 4, Number 31 was a respectable eighty-eight pages. Its advertisers were a stable of such blue-chips as Mercedes-Benz, Microsoft, and Absolut. The masthead remained strong, a collection of talented mid-career journalists and promising young reporters who shared a genuine camaraderie. The journalism was maturing as the *Standard*, freed from chronicling the dot-com mania, expanded its coverage. Whether the *Standard* could have survived the eco-

nomic fallout from September 11 is problematic. Even by the time of the company's bankruptcy hearing two weeks later on September 24, the magazine already seemed a relic of a fast-fading era.

As I write this, I'm back in Australia, in the same spot overlooking the Pacific where I was sitting when I received that first e-mail nearly four years ago. I'm reminded daily of the technological transformation we covered as I manage my finances from halfway around the world, keep tabs on news at home, and post video of my three-year-old son on the Web for his grandparents in the States. But ironically, in the aftermath of the *Standard's* collapse, I found I could no longer read online what I wrote about the revolution; the archives of *The Industry Standard*, the late, great chronicler of the Internet age, have been wiped from the Web, de-Googled. Thankfully, IDG, which owns the magazine's electronic remains, recently revived the *Standard's* library. Some dead dot-coms do tell tales after all. ■

Todd Woody (todddwoody@yahoo.com) was a senior editor at *The Industry Standard*. He currently is a free-lance journalist based in Sydney, Australia.

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VOICES

PRESS FREEDOM

BARBARA STEWART PAGE 66

Celebrating Life

Portraits of Grief salves a wounded city

FRANK CLANCY PAGE 68

Spirit of '76

Reaching back to clarify
a twenty-first century tussle

SCOTT SHERMAN PAGE 70

Farewell *Lingua Franca*

A taste of journalistic freedom
in a decade of O.J. and Monica

LAWRENCE K. GROSSMAN PAGE 72

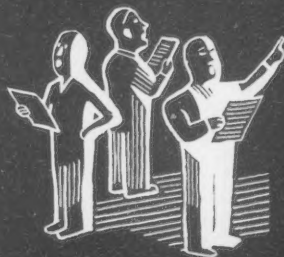
Media CEOs

Pining for Paley, Tinker, and Murphy
as the public trust gets trampled

GENEVA OVERHOLSER PAGE 74

One Voice

The need for harmony
among journalism's champions



VOICES, funded in part by the Ford Foundation, offers independent viewpoints on a variety of subjects. CJR welcomes contributions. You may submit manuscripts to the locations listed on page 4.

Look Who's Inspiring Global Censorship



BY JOEL SIMON

Joel Simon is the deputy director of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Shortly after the hijacked planes slammed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, thousands of Palestinians poured into the streets in the West Bank city of Nablus to celebrate by honking horns, handing out sweets, and firing their guns into the air. The demonstrators may not have represented the sentiment of the majority of Palestinians, but the protest was a newsworthy event, and journalists were there to record it.

Later that day, officials from the Palestinian National Authority summoned a cameraman from The Associated Press who had filmed the demonstration and told him that he would be in danger if the images were broadcast. Fearing for the cameraman's safety, the AP decided not to air the footage. A few days later, Palestinian authorities confiscated film from journalists covering a rally at a Gaza refugee camp supporting suicide bombers.

The incidents in the Palestinian territories marked the onset of a global crackdown on press freedom. Fearing international ostracism or an angry response from the U.S., some governments have suppressed coverage of public support for radical Islam or opposition to U.S. policies. At the same time, repressive regimes around the globe are taking advantage of the new international climate to suppress coverage of political opponents or ethnic tension under the guise of protecting national security or combating terrorism.

Even more alarming, many of these governments are citing the U.S. response to the September 11 attacks to justify their repressive measures.

Only a few days after the attacks, the U.S. State Department contacted the Voice of America and expressed concern about the broadcast of a report featuring an exclusive interview with the Taliban leader, Mullah Mohammed Omar. "We didn't think that the American taxpayer . . . should be broadcasting the voice of the Taliban," explained the State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher.

Then on October 3, Secretary of State Colin Powell asked the Emir of Qatar to use his influence to rein in Al-Jazeera, the Arabic-language satellite station that is broadcast out of Qatar and bankrolled by the government. The request from Powell followed a for-

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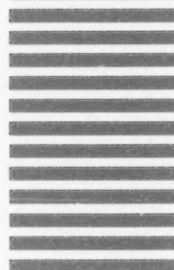
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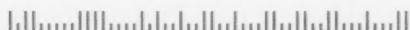
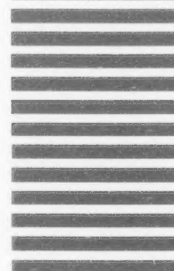
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mal diplomatic protest by the U.S. Embassy in Qatar, which expressed concern about the station's alleged anti-American bias and its repeated airing of a 1998 exclusive interview with Osama bin Laden.

A week later, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice spoke with a group of U.S. television executives by phone and asked them to use caution when airing pre-recorded messages from bin Laden and his associates. Rice noted that such statements were at best propaganda, and could contain coded instructions to terrorist cells.

The pressure tactics used by the U.S. government seem to have inspired leaders across the globe to take a similar but more aggressive approach with their own media. The new restrictions range from the brazen to the bizarre, but all are justified as necessary measures in the "war against terrorism."

■ In Uganda, journalists have been barred since October from photographing the president, even during public functions, because, as he explained, "I am a useful person, and I cannot allow these people to blow me up."

■ In China, a nominal U.S. ally in the war on terrorism, the government has banned anti-American reporting from its government-controlled press.

■ In Indonesia, the police beat four journalists covering an October anti-U.S. demonstration.

■ In the tiny West African country of Benin, three journalists were arrested for reporting that bin Laden had contacts there.

■ In Israel, the state radio was banned from airing live interviews with Palestinian militants.

■ And in Russia, a presidential adviser, Sergei Yastrzhemsky, said the Putin government planned to study the American response to media reporting about terrorists in order to develop rules for Russian media.

In some cases, countries with a long history of animosity toward the press are opportunistically using the new climate to justify further restrictions. In Zimbabwe, for example, information minister Jonathan Moyo, who is leading a systematic and sometimes violent campaign against the independent media in Zimbabwe, invoked the U.S. in trying to justify ongoing restrictions on visas for foreign correspondents.

"We are watching events in the United States and Britain closely as pertaining to media freedom," said Moyo, according to a local report. "These countries, especially the U.S.A., have unashamedly limited press freedom since September 11 in the name of safeguarding the national interest If the most celebrated democracies in the world won't allow their national interests to be tampered with, we will not allow it too."

Even more disturbing, some countries that have generally encouraged independent media are imposing new restrictions. In India, anti-terrorism legislation that was being debated before Parliament at the end of the year would make it a crime punishable by up to three years in prison for journalists not to inform authorities about information that could be used to prevent a "terrorist act." Journalists and media organizations in India have denounced the provision, arguing that journalists cannot play the role of policeman.

Governments have long used concerns about national security as a pretext to restrict reporting on conflicts. The argument is a red herring: governments are hard-pressed to point to any instance in which journalists genuinely compromised national security through their reporting. What ends up being suppressed is reporting about the grievances of the "enemy" or critical coverage about the prosecution of the war.

The forcible suppression of dissenting

voices is an understandable impulse during wartime, but it is ultimately self-destructive because it deprives the public of the ability to understand and analyze the causes of the conflict and to assess the efficacy of the military response.

At several points in its history, the U.S. government has itself imposed severe restrictions on the press during war, notably during World War II, when the Office of Censorship kept careful tabs on the media. The legality of such measures has never been definitively settled by the Supreme Court, although many First Amendment scholars believe that censorship, even during wartime, is unconstitutional. After all, the limitations imposed on the government by the Constitution apply equally during war and peace.

It is worth noting that the Constitution itself was drafted during a time of conflict and turmoil, and Thomas Jefferson believed that a free press could prevent future conflicts by bringing public officials before the "tribunal of public opinion," a process which "produces reform peaceably which must otherwise be done by revolution."

In the last half century the notion that an unfettered press is an essential element of any free society has become universalized, enshrined in national constitutions around the world and recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Because America's First Amendment is the gold standard of press freedom guarantees, even limited efforts by the U.S. government to influence the work of the press have an enormous ripple effect around the globe. While U.S. media are in a strong position to resist government pressure, the same cannot be said for journalists in such countries as Zimbabwe, Russia, or Indonesia, who face growing pressures from their leaders. ■

Even limited efforts by the U.S. government to influence the work of the press have an enormous ripple effect around the globe

Amid So Much Death, Celebrations of Life



BY BARBARA STEWART

Barbara Stewart is a reporter on the metropolitan desk of The New York Times.

In the four months since *The New York Times* began to run Portraits of Grief — its profiles of the September 11 victims — they have generated an extraordinary amount of attention and praise. New Yorkers tend to speak of them with a kind of awe, as if they were sacred writings. Many readers seem to regard the reporters who write them as heroic and the *Times* as noble and generous for providing space and paying the people creating and editing them. There have been letters calling the project “the Lord’s work,” and even offers of money to encourage the paper with its efforts. (The plan is to write profiles of all the approximately 3,000 victims whose families agree. The project should be more or less finished this month; it will be reproduced in book form with copies given to the families.)

Certainly, Portraits of Grief has been a major effort, involving scores of reporters and editors. A total of eight reporters, of whom I am one, write them full-time, half for one two-week period and half for the other. A full page or two of portraits runs every day, with fifteen short stories and fifteen small photos per page.

The first sign that the portraits were striking chords with readers were the invitations from morning news shows, asking reporters to talk about their experiences. National Public Radio interviewed Wendell Jamieson, who is editing the profiles, and *Vanity Fair* ran a full-page photo of the reporters and editors sitting in ergonomic chairs and looking intensely solemn, if not positively glum, in its December issue.

The tradition of running short profiles of the victims of disasters,

like plane crashes and fires, is probably as old as newspapering. This fall, several newspapers in cities hard-hit by the attacks — including *The Washington Post*, *Newsday*, and the *Newark Star-Ledger* — have had brief obituaries of the September 11 victims from their areas.

But the portraits are not obituaries or brief biographies. They are something different — impressionistic sketches, or, as one of the metropolitan editors who created them says, “little jewels.” Like a quick caricature that captures a likeness, they are intimate tales that give an impression, an image, of a person. They skip most items required in standard obituaries: survivors, lists of colleges, degrees earned, jobs held, descriptions of newsworthy accomplishments.

The focus is on characteristics, like sweetness or a love of cozying up at home, or private passions, like shopping or paddleball. Or on quirks, idiosyncrasies or funny tales, like the one of a banker who stabbed his hand while fishing, trapping hook, hand, and fish together — and who subsequently regaled friends with the tale at every opportunity.

While they are obviously meant to be accurate, they are clearly not objective. They are based on the highly colored recollections of family and friends, and are the kind of stories told at wakes and memorial services. Often the memories are sad, but none are embarrassing or mean-spirited. It is unlikely that all the victims have been honest and generous, but none has been described as a cheat or a skinflint. The information comes from the people who cared about them. Basically, the

profiles are about love — not the usual focus of a daily newspaper.

“Have fun with them,” an editor said when I began. To people outside journalism, that might sound like an utterly perverse instruction. But they are fun in a way. As just about every reporter knows, interviewing people in extreme situations, including grief, tends to be intense, emotional, and highly interesting. It is wrenching when the person I am talking with is sobbing, which happens pretty often, but the stories they tell are fascinating. Gradually, I get a real sense of the person.

There was the Staten Island grandmother, a passionate shopper and a size eight, who wore a shiny gold raincoat and pink rhinestone glasses and pulled it off with panache. And a banker who spent every Saturday and Sunday morning playing paddleball. And a twenty-six-year-old trader from Cantor Fitzgerald — the bond trading company that lost 700 of its 1,000 New York employees — who thought up a memorable way to propose to his girlfriend. He would take her to the family cabin in the Adirondacks, take her for a spin on the lake and steer near the shore, where his sixteen nieces and nephews would be holding a big sign: “Will You Marry Me?”

There was a young trader who sent his younger brother in college two blank checks, writing: “Don’t work. Study. And don’t tell Dad I



gave you this." And an immigrant salad-maker who barely managed to support his four children and mentally ill wife, and who loved being around his kids so much that his sister had to gently tell him that teenagers would rather spend weekends with their friends than go to the park with their father. And a twenty-three-year-old Chicago woman, recently engaged, on her first trip to New York. She arrived at night, on September 10, and got to the World Trade Center, where she had business, about 8:30 Tuesday morning.

The details emerge slowly, like a flat figure stepping into a third dimension. Initially, most people say pretty much the same thing: "X was wonderful. He was such a kind, good, smart person. We loved him so much." We start with ordinary things: What was she good at? What did she like to do when she wasn't working? Soon a thread dangles, and I pull. Mrs. Beekman called her husband a "family man." Sure, I thought, he and nearly all the other victims. But his love for children was so intense that he liked to slip away on weekend afternoons, and would be found at his sister's house nearby, stacking blocks with his two- and three-year-old nieces and nephews. Jean Andrucki, a Port Authority employee, liked sports, says her sister. Well, who doesn't? But Ms. Andrucki's sport was Gaelic football, an obscure Irish game, which she played with a team in the Bronx.

Nancy Morgenstern was an Orthodox Jew who liked to bicycle. In fact, she was a skilled racer who traveled to competitions throughout the Eastern seaboard, adhering strictly to Jewish tenets in towns that had never heard of kosher food. On Saturdays, she turned her cell phone off, stayed in her motel room, and ate the kosher tuna sandwiches she had brought.

The interviews usually last half an hour or so. At first they are formal, but soon become freewheeling and intimate. After ten minutes, we sound like old friends. Though a few people have not wanted a profile or have been too upset to be interviewed, the majority have been eager to talk about the people they loved. That contradicts the cliché of a reporter barging in on grieving families and bothering them with tactless questions. One woman said she got more out of talking about her husband to reporters from *Newsday* and the *Times* than from talking to her therapist.

Some families waited for weeks or months before agreeing to an interview

because they were hoping their loved one was still alive — knocked on the head by a piece of rubble and wandering around the city streets with amnesia.

For me, the early weeks were the hardest. The shock was fresh. "Missing" posters were everywhere, the air smelled bad, and I had personal memorial services to go to. The names in the *Times* queues, copied from posters and corporate, government, and media lists, kept increasing. I would glance around the newsroom, close my eyes to rest them, and when I looked back at the list I would only be up the L's. It felt as though death was everywhere.

The shock the reporters were feeling is hinted at in the September profiles. Most include details of the victims' final minutes, the number of the floor they were on, their desperate final cell phone calls. Soon, though, it became clear that the profiles should concentrate on people's lives, not their deaths.

My friends outside of journalism say the news is starting to pall on them. But the Portraits of Grief is not. Frequently, people say they read every profile, every day, or save them to read later. They follow the profiles religiously, in the literal sense, as if they are offering the grieving families the gift of their attention and unexpressed sympathy. Some people say the portraits upset them and they can only read two or three at a time. But nobody seems to ignore them. The profiles, they say, bring the grief home and make it real and touching. They turn an incomprehensibly vast tragedy into thousands of accessible tragedies — individual and heartbreaking.

So far, I have written about seventy profiles. Listening to their families and friends describe them and their mutual love has changed the way I feel about the people of New York. Strangers in this crowded city often feel like nothing more than irritants and obstacles. They grab the empty train seat, elbow me on the sidewalk, talk in loud voices, and block my view of paintings at museums. Now, sometimes, when I am not too tired or in too sour a mood, I gaze at strangers on the train or in Times Square and think of them as people with full, rich stories. Writing the profiles is like getting to know some really interesting people and, at the same time, losing them. Or like going to a lively party filled with colorful guests, but getting there too late, after they have left. It makes me want to make more of an effort now, with living people, to be more open, to get to know them while we are all still here. ■

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Now Is the Time to Revive The Spirit of '76 — and of 1976, Too



BY FRANK CLANCY

Frank Clancy is a writer from Minneapolis. This article is adapted from comments he made at a conference on copyright law sponsored by the Twin Cities Local of the National Writers Union in October.

I wrote my first cover story for a national magazine fifteen years ago. That article, which was published in *Mother Jones*, told the dramatic story of five antinuclear protesters who drove and then hiked onto the Nevada Test Site, a hundred miles northwest of Las Vegas, in the hope

of stopping an underground nuclear test. I accompanied them, evading security guards and walking through the sandy desert at night, by the light of the moon. It was a grueling and dangerous assignment. During the day, we endured temperatures above 110 degrees. When the bomb exploded, we were about four miles away. The next morning, we were arrested.

My contract, which I signed in June 1986, granted *Mother Jones* the right to publish the story once, in English, as well as the right to use it for limited promotional and educational purposes. The contract also contained five optional clauses permitting other uses, including syndication, for which I would receive at least half the magazine's income. The choice of whether to grant those additional rights was entirely mine.

In other words, that contract left no doubt who owned my words. I did. After *Mother Jones* published the article, I resold it several times. I also sold an option to a movie producer, who paid me \$2,500 — \$1,000 more than my original fee.

The fact that I so effortlessly retained control of that article was hardly an accident. A decade earlier, Congress had extensively revised copyright law, clarifying an ambiguous and, to writers, unfair situation, which had often result-

ed in the loss of copyright when a story appeared in a magazine. The Copyright Act of 1976 made it clear that the moment a writer puts pen to paper — or, now, whatever happens to silicon when typing on a computer — he or she owns the copyright to those words, which is distinct from a magazine's copyright in the collective work. And, unless the writer specifically agrees to transfer copyright or sell additional rights, a publisher acquires only the right to publish a story once.

These principles were at the heart of the most widely publicized copyright case in recent years, *New York Times Co. v. Jonathan Tasini*, which the Supreme Court decided last June. In the lawsuit that led to this decision, six free-lance writers had claimed that the *Times* and other publishers violated copyright law by allowing electronic databases such as LexisNexis to redistribute their articles. The Court ruled seven to two in the writers' favor.

This victory, too, of individual writers against the country's most powerful newspaper, was likewise a direct result of the Copyright Act of 1976, in which Congress clearly intended to enable writers to maintain control of, and profit from, their work. The majority opinion in the *Tasini* case, for example, says the 1976 law was designed to "address the unfair situation under prior law," and to help writers counteract publishers' "superior bargaining power." Even Justice Stevens, in his dissenting opinion, acknowledged that before 1976, "an author's decision to publish her individual article as part of a collective work was a perilous one." There was, he added, "significant pressure on an author . . . to

transfer the entire copyright over to the publisher . . . [T]he drafters of the 1976 act hoped to 'enhance the author's position vis-à-vis the patron.'

This approach is both ethical and practical. Basic fairness as well as common sense demand that a person who writes something at the very least shares in the resulting revenue. By assuring that writers have an economic incentive to write, the law enhances the nation's cultural life. I would argue, in fact, that this incentive is inextricably linked to the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech — it's the economic engine that drives creativity and public debate. Copyright law also acknowledges the fundamental difference between intellectual and other types of property: my words are not like a fax machine purchased at Sears, but rather belong to me even as I toss them out into the universe. Thus I began this essay by describing my article about antinuclear protesters because my involvement in that story, and its risks, highlight the essence of intellectual property. Every word, every sentence, and every idea contain a part of me.

But even as *Tasini*, which was filed in 1993, traveled its circuitous route through the court system, the publishing world was evolving. The Internet exploded in popularity, allowing words to be distributed almost effortlessly, and publishers scrambled to find new ways to profit from writers' words. Large publishers swallowed small, only to be merged into vast conglomerates that held enormous economic power over writers. And, seeking to protect clients from potential liability, lawyers wrote contracts that

seized what rights the law might not give. As a result, the *Tasini* case may prove to be a Pyrrhic victory.

At many and perhaps most magazines, newspapers, and Web sites published in the United States, free-lance writers experience what Justice Stevens called "significant pressure" to sign away their rights. Far too often, we find ourselves "at the mercy of publishers," forced to give away all or most rights in return for the privilege of being published. Publishers from *The New York Times* to Gannett to AOL Time Warner are using onerous contracts to subvert the intent of the 1976 copyright law and its basic principle of fairness.

In November 2000, for example, when I took an assignment from the *Times*, my first, the newspaper sent a contract that granted "all right, title and interest, including copyright, . . . for all purposes throughout the world . . ." When I sought to amend it, I was told the contract wasn't negotiable. Reluctantly, I signed.

Maybe I shouldn't complain. Some contracts demand all rights throughout the universe. At least I can resell my *Times* words on Pluto.

Another example: Last July, Time4 Media, a part of the AOL Time Warner empire that publishes about fifteen magazines, including *Skiing*, unilaterally issued a standard contract that was, one editor explained, "being used across all Time4 Media titles." All articles, the *Skiing* contract said, would be the magazine's "sole and exclusive property as a work made for hire within the meaning of the United States copyright laws." And — stating the obvious, in light of the foregoing — *Skiing* would be free to use those articles however the magazine wanted.

But *Skiing* writers balked. Dozens refused to sign the agreement. A month later, editor-in-chief Rick Kahl (who has since left the magazine for unrelated reasons) sent what he described as a "new, revised, and in many ways improved contract." Alas, it too insisted that all articles belonged to the magazine (although it also allowed writers to re-sell their words three months after publication).

Conceding that the contract was not perfect, he explained that "Time Inc. believes that since every article in *Skiing* is the product of our combined efforts, it is reasonable for us to retain the copyright.

Skiing commissions the article, pays all expenses, and helps to shape each article through our editing and layout design." It is as though moving commas were more important than writing; as though the decision to put a story on page forty-six, beside a half-page color photo, trumps the writer's contribution.

Note that Kahl uses the word *retain*, not *take* (or *purchase*, or *acquire*, or *steal*) — as though copyright did not first belong to the writer. Note, too, that he ignores the crucial distinction between the writer's ownership of his or her words and the publisher's ownership of the collective work.

Among the arguments used by publishers in the *Tasini* case to rationalize the taking of intellectual property was that they wanted to preserve the historical record. That is, in my opinion, a smoke screen. The *Times* didn't ask to include my article in a special database that would be sold at a modest price to schools and libraries — the equivalent of yesterday's microfiche; the *Times* demanded all rights.

This dispute isn't about the historical record. It's about money, about profiting from writers' work — our intellectual property. And unlike the microfiche of old, electronic databases and Web site archives are not single, discrete publications. Publishers want to make money from our work forever — without paying us another penny. Web sites, foreign-language editions, entire newspaper sections licensed in other markets — in the jargon of today, these business innovations are called "branding." Words and ideas are like chocolate-stuffed Oreos, another way to increase the bottom line.

In defense of the terrible free-lance contracts that dominate the industry, publishers sometimes claim that only small amounts of money are at stake — a share of the \$2.50, say, that the *Times* charges to download my article from its Web site. That argument is both untrue and irrelevant.

Untrue because even that small fee, multiplied over years and decades, can amount to a large sum of money being denied writers; and because many contracts demand other rights, such as the right to make derivative works, that can be worth tens of thousands of dollars to individual writers.

Irrelevant because authority for copy-

right law stems directly from the Constitution, which grants Congress the power to secure the *exclusive* rights of writers — not publishers — to our work. Indeed, the framers of the Constitution deemed this principle to be so important they enshrined it, alongside a parallel right of inventors, in Article I: "Congress shall have power," they wrote, ". . . to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries . . ."

Like many legal battles, this conflict over copyright has profound implications for the public. Free-lancers write most of the articles published by American magazines, as well as many that appear in newspapers; without our contributions, many could not survive. Through organizations like the National Writers Union, the Authors Guild, and the American Society of Journalists and Authors, we're struggling to protect our interests. But we are, to be blunt, losing the war. Losing badly. For most magazine writers, the "exclusive right" to our work, mentioned so prominently in the Constitution, has become an illusion. Among us, there is profound dissatisfaction with the state of the industry.

The only solution, I believe, is for Congress to do once again what it did in the 1970s: thoroughly reevaluate and revise copyright law to protect the interests of writers, who now negotiate with corporations that have grown ever larger since 1976. In its *Tasini* decision, the Supreme Court suggested as much, writing that authors and publishers "and if necessary the courts and Congress, may draw on numerous models for distributing copyrighted works and remunerating authors for their distribution"; the Court cited a case involving the licensing and royalty system for broadcast and recorded music. That would surely be a good first step. But I also recognize that my best work — that *Mother Jones* story, for example — has usually resulted from a collaborative relationship with editors. So the best solutions will come when publishers, editors, and writers work together to insure the vitality of the industry as well as the ability of writers to profit from their work. It's really not much to ask. All I want Congress to do is what the Constitution says. ■

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VOICES MAGAZINES

What We Lost When *Lingua Franca* Fell



BY SCOTT SHERMAN

Scott Sherman was a contributing writer to *Lingua Franca*. He is now a contributing editor to CJR.

In the early summer of 1995, in a cramped, cluttered newsstand in Greenwich Village, I purchased my first copy of *Lingua Franca: The Review of Academic Life*. The headline grabbed me: "Inventing Wills: How an Ex-Jesuit, Sometime

Professor Became America's Heavyweight Know-It-All." I was intrigued that *Lingua Franca's* writer, Adam Begley, had somehow convinced the brilliant and irascible Garry Wills, who rarely grants interviews, to cooperate with a full-length profile. Begley's piece was startlingly powerful and intimate, filled with witty asides and shrewd assessments of Wills and his work. Rarely had I seen writing that was so edgy and compelling.

I had just launched a career as a free-lance writer, and the few clips I had were from obscure publications. Nevertheless, I dispatched a blind story pitch to *Lingua Franca's* young editor, Alexander Star. Two days later my phone rang; it was Star. "Let's do it," he declared. Two weeks after that, I was on a plane to Chicago to report the piece, which turned out to be five thousand words long. It was the beginning of a relationship that endured until October 2001, when the news of *Lingua Franca's* demise spread quickly through New York's literary and journalistic community.

Founded in 1990, *Lingua Franca* did for academia what *The American Lawyer* did for the legal profession: it cast a calm searchlight on the nooks and crannies — and follies — of university life and conveyed its findings in crisp, lean prose. But it was not merely a mag-

azine about professors. Its beat, instead, was the vast universe where academia collided with the real world. Like William Shawn's *New Yorker* or Lewis Lapham's *Harper's*, *Lingua Franca* concerned itself with both the quirky and the profound. It was a magazine for people who liked to read and think, and they were richly rewarded with articles about Jorge Luis Borges's translators and James Joyce's manuscripts; about cannibalism and fingerprinting; about academic murder scandals in Italy and pro-Milosevic intellectuals in Yugoslavia, to name but a few.

For young writers, *Lingua Franca* provided unique opportunities for long-form narrative journalism. It gave writers the freedom — and the space — to pursue their passions. This I know firsthand. In 1999, in the shabby outskirts of Mexico City, fifty thousand students shut down the sprawling campus of the University of Mexico, Latin America's largest university. It was not only a civil war between proud, politicized students and the Mexican government, but also a fierce class conflict between impoverished and bourgeois undergraduates. Faculty members were also bitterly split. In short, it was a perfect *Lingua Franca* story: there was a powerful academic angle, but larger themes were also present — underdevelopment, class mobility, political commitment.

When Star first asked me to write about the strike, I declined: I had witnessed it, and was intimidated by its complexity. But Star refused to take no for an answer, and, what's more, he found the money to send me to Mexico City for two weeks.





After several grueling rewrites — *Lingua Franca* was journalistic boot camp — the editors, in their ongoing quest for perfection, found a native speaker of Spanish to fact-check the piece, all 6,500 words of it. It turned out to be the most satisfying journalistic experience I had ever had.

Lingua Franca left a mark on the profession: it did much to invent an entire genre of intellectual reporting, one that *The New York Times* felt compelled to imitate by launching a Saturday section entitled "Arts & Ideas"; many of its writers and editors graduated to *The New Yorker* and the *Times*; it was nominated for the National Magazine Award on five separate occasions. But the good times couldn't last: *Lingua Franca*, unlike *Harper's* or *The New Republic*, failed to attract a sizeable readership outside academia. The circulation never exceeded twenty thousand — a figure that in no way corresponded to the magazine's influence, for it was noticed and read in the higher echelons of Manhattan's media and publishing universe. *Lingua Franca* is currently seeking new investors, but its heavy losses, believed to be \$200,000 a year, suggest that its revival may be a long shot.

When the end came, on October 17, it was as if a meteor hit. There was generous praise from literary heavyweights — "I always found something fascinating to read in that magazine, and not infrequently something that I wish we had had for *The New Yorker*," David Remnick told *The New York Times*. But the staff was instantly discharged, with no severance pay, and gloom and melancholy pervaded the magazine's community. Still, for a short time, those of us in that community tasted pure journalistic freedom, which liberated us, in the roaring 1990s, from having to write about Bill Gates's fortune, O.J. Simpson's Bronco, or Monica Lewinsky's dress. ■

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VOICES TELEVISION

Wanted: A New Breed of Media with Old-Fashioned Values



BY LAWRENCE K. GROSSMAN

Lawrence K. Grossman, a former president of NBC News and PBS, is a regular columnist for CJR.

In the aftermath of September 11, the nation needs a new breed of media company chief executives who "exercise their power in a way that recognizes there's a public trust" and have a "higher order of priority than delivering a return to shareholders." That heretical idea was delivered to an approving audience at a forum in Manhattan in November by none other than AOL Time Warner's Gerald M. Levin.

The c.e.o. of the world's biggest multimedia conglomerate (who is retiring from that job in May) went "on the record" to commit his own company to new priorities for a new day. "We are not going to do a mathematical scorecard on something that is our obligation," Levin said. "We will spend whatever it takes; we will support whatever CNN, Time, and AOL want to do. Our obligation [is] not to just inform, but to provide insight and understanding about what's going on that affects everybody's life around the world today."

So far, Levin's fellow media moguls do not appear to share his public-service priorities. In November, *The New York Times* reported that Viacom's CBS had ordered budget cuts in its most important news show, *60 Minutes*, blaming the increased costs of covering the war in Afghanistan. Longtime competitors CBS and ABC have taken the unprecedented step of holding discussions to merge their overseas news bureaus and personnel to save money, a move that would further diminish healthy competition in gathering

and reporting news. Also in November, a national survey of local TV news taken last summer by the Project for Excellence in Journalism reported that half the news directors who responded said they had to make budget cuts or layoffs at their stations; two-thirds said they were filling more time slots with local news — whose mainstays are often crime and celebrities — because it is cheaper than other programming. While the survey was conducted shortly before the World Trade Center attack, nothing has happened since in local TV news to suggest that it will not continue to remain (as the study suggested) "on dangerous ground."

Like much else after September 11, Levin's call for a new breed of public-spirited corporate managers represents a significant departure from the single-minded focus on financial priorities that prevailed in the days before the world changed. The nation's most celebrated c.e.o. then was chairman Jack Welch of GE, described in the October 1 *New Yorker* as "a feared and confrontational manager, with a fanatical devotion to cutting costs and boosting profits." Before September 11, Jack's "fanatical devotion" to the bottom line was viewed as the model to emulate. His memoir with the macho title, *Jack: Straight from the Gut*, published the week the World Trade Center was destroyed, described yesterday's values: Business is a game, played to be won. And winning is defined by only one thing — how much money you can make.

When GE bought NBC in 1986, I was president of NBC News. In his book, Jack complains

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that I operated "under the theory that networks should lose money while covering the news in the name of journalistic integrity." The two of us, he said, "were on different planets." I take his complaint as a compliment. Under the law, broadcasters, who hold valuable licenses to use the public's airwaves, are considered public trustees. I thought, and still do, that responsible worldwide network news coverage, which is costly, is an obligation to be borne by the network broadcasters as a loss leader if need be. I come from the Bill Paley school of network leadership. At a year-end dinner for CBS News correspondents, presided over by the network's founding chairman, Charles Collingwood expressed concern that TV news was going to cost Paley, who was also the company's biggest stockholder, a heck of a lot of money. "Don't worry about that," Paley replied. "You guys cover the news. I've got Jack Benny to make money for me."

Welch's priorities were entirely different. He made it clear that he would judge NBC News no differently than any other GE division. News would be expected to make the same profit margins they did. Welch was disdainful of any other approach. The news division, he said, had no greater obligation to provide public service than those GE lines that manufacture refrigerators, light bulbs, or jet engines. For Welch, as one critic put it, the financial perspective was the only one that mattered. That tunnel vision helped produce an era of network news that focused more on nonfiction entertainment than on the information citizens need about a dangerous and vulnerable world.

News from faraway places is front and center again. Coverage of that news is expensive. Gerry Levin says we need a new breed with new values to lead multimedia companies. I say we need a new breed with the old-fashioned values of CBS's Bill Paley, NBC's Grant Tinker, and ABC's Tom Murphy, who in their day were as concerned about the public trust as they were about the bottom line. ■

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Journalism's Champions Must Speak With One Voice



BY GENEVA OVERHOLSER

Geneva Overholser (genevaoh@aol.com), a syndicated columnist for The Washington Post Writers Group, writes regularly for CJR about newspapers. She holds an endowed chair at the University of Missouri school of journalism. Among positions she has held are editorial writer for *The New York Times*, editor of *The Des Moines Register*, and ombudsman for *The Washington Post*. She also served nine years on the Pulitzer Prize board.

What might journalists accomplish if we could speak with one voice on those rare occasions when that voice is sorely needed?

A November *New York Times* article, on the current battle for public opinion, noted the Pentagon's tight hold on information and said:

"Thus far, news organizations' only response has been increasingly frustrated questioning of the policy in weekly meetings with Victoria Clarke, the chief Pentagon spokeswoman. No unified challenge has been made by top editors, broadcast news presidents or publishers."

Not that there haven't been efforts. At October's APME meeting in Milwaukee, the council of presidents of journalism organizations — which to date has largely occupied itself with such practical matters as ensuring that the various convention dates didn't overlap — took the unprecedented step of attempting a joint statement on the importance of wartime press access to information. Significantly, twenty-six organizations joined in. But the council represents thirty-five. Some prominent members — the American Society of Newspaper Editors among them — declined to sign. ASNE later joined the Newspaper Association of America in a separate statement. Meanwhile, bureau chiefs in Washington were holding regular meetings with the Pentagon. Each of these efforts was important. But inevitably, the fracturing results in less effectiveness, less public awareness, and less influence on the government.

There have been of late several prominent calls for some kind of national voice of — or for — journalism. Peter Goldmark, chairman and c.e.o. of the *International Herald*

Tribune, in a speech at the Aspen Institute in August 2000, called on media executives to "fund, jointly with your sister companies, an independent council to track, promote, examine, and defend the independent news function in America and in the world at large." Jay Harris, in a speech at Harvard last May after his resignation as publisher of the *San Jose Mercury News*, called for a new version of the 1947 Hutchins Commission on press freedom and responsibility, to move the debate about "unfettered market forces" onto a larger stage. The Newspaper Guild's Committee on the Future of Journalism made a similar recommendation a couple of years ago. And a group gathered in 2000 by the Ford Foundation recommended establishment of a nationwide partnership for quality journalism.

If journalism had a national voice, it could be raised at this moment on behalf of freedom of information and on behalf of an industry-wide recommitment to public service after years of just-another-business performance. Never have these messages had more potential for impact. With single-copy sales at some newspapers running as much as 10,000 above normal, it's clear the public yearns for good journalism. Equally evident — in the surprise among so many upon learning of the strength of anti-American sentiments abroad — is the negative effect of the dramatic cutbacks in foreign news in the years leading up to September 11.

Since the terrorists struck, the performance of America's newspapers has been extraordinary. But it would be a miracle if such a commitment of resources to news were to continue. Even before 9/11, advertising was down, and profits threat-

ened. Now, virtually every newspaper company expects to fall dramatically short of already lowered projections. Surely this moment of dislocation is the time for newspaper company executives to tell a different story to Wall Street — one that, instead of disconnecting good journalism and high earnings and emphasizing the latter, focuses on the commitment to public service. As the Knight Foundation's Eric Newton, lamenting the current situation, said at an October seminar sponsored by the Nieman Foundation and New Directions for News: "Being a cash cow is a strategy." It's a strategy that has hurt the public and undermined democracy. And it's time we acknowledged that, loud and clear — now, when the public's reliance on us is greater than ever, and when the costs of our failure to serve them well have been made evident.

But without some national voice for journalism, how can we bring the public in on the discussion? How can we help embolden executives to tell a different story? How can we effectively bring change? I don't know whether what is needed is a new national body such as Goldmark or Harris envisions, or simply an effective coalition of existing groups willing to put down their differences and speak in one voice. I lean toward the latter, both because that course seems more practicable and because it recognizes the allergic reaction to anything smacking of monolithic views in an industry of rugged independence and individualism.

Independence is all to the good — but not at the price of failing to take a stand. American journalism needs an effective champion. As long as we cannot speak in one voice, we cannot meet the need. ■

BOOKS

Is Doing the Right Thing Wrong?

BY PETER SCHRAG

A lot of people will find it easy to dismiss William McGowan's charges of political correctness against the nation's major news organizations — the networks, Gannett, Knight Ridder, *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and, in particular, *The New York Times*. Though a self-professed centrist and veteran journalist, McGowan is a fellow at the conservative Manhattan Institute; his book is published by Encounter, a conservative house that is underwritten by the very conservative Bradley Foundation, and he leaves little doubt about his determination, all contrary arguments aside, to prove a case: On a range of hot-button issues ranging from race and gay rights to immigration, he contends, the media have sunk into a "disturbing conformity" — a race- and gender-conscious pro-"diversity" agenda — that has distorted the news, alienated readers and viewers, and undermined honest policy discussion. "Far from be-

COLORING THE NEWS: HOW CRUSADING FOR DIVERSITY HAS CORRUPTED AMERICAN JOURNALISM.

BY WILLIAM MCGOWAN
ENCOUNTER BOOKS. 278 PP. \$25.95

ing a progressive source of new ideas," he writes, "in many instances the press represents a tired bulwark of liberal dogma and reaction, enforcing a PC conventional wisdom."



But let's not rush to judgment. If this is a tendentious book, it's also an important one that's certain to raise a lot of hackles. McGowan's case — and it's often a powerful case — rests on an extensive list of horrors from the past decade, stories about how reporters and editors, embracing the causes they write about or under pressure from corporate managers or ethnic interest groups, or seeking to fill yet another niche in their publishers' marketing strategies, abandon their skepticism, ignore contrary data, twist the news or, if it doesn't fit a politically correct formula, ignore it altogether. Among his issues: affirmative action in university admissions; gays and women in the military; alleged racism in the executive suite; the burdens imposed

on state and local schools and welfare services by immigrants; and, of course, the professed blessings of multiculturalism. Separately, such complaints have been issued before, usually from the right. McGowan packages them all in one book.

It's a long list:

■ News organization policies (since scaled back) of "content audits" and/or "mainstreaming," as at Gannett, that required editors and reporters to quote enough blacks and Latinos from a minority source list to reflect "the face of the country." Some newspapers also had numerical formulas for evaluating managers on their success in running positive stories and pictures of minorities. Many more did so informally. In Burlington, Vermont, Paul

Teetor, a reporter at Gannett's *Free Press*, which was feeling the heat from headquarters, was summarily fired — according to McGowan, it took all of a minute and a half — after a black activist named Rodney Patterson threatened to sue and march on the paper if it didn't fire Teetor and apologize for a story Teetor had written. The offending part, well down in the story, was a description of how Patterson, an aide to Burlington's mayor, had ejected a white woman, who was trying to defend Vermonters against charges of racism, from a community meeting. The meeting, he had declared, was for people of color only.

■ The failure of the elite media to report on the extent that affirmative ac-

What bothers McGowan most is the media's embrace of a 'multicultural paradigm' that rejects as borderline racism the historic American ideal of assimilation

tion in university admissions grew into blatant systems of race preferences, much less investigate the negative effects those formulas have had, particularly on the supposed beneficiaries themselves. He tells — or rather re-tells — the story of Patrick Chavis, a black physician who was one of the beneficiaries of a numerical quota system at the University of California at Davis medical school. Chavis was later lionized, first in a major piece by Nicholas Lemann in *The New York Times Magazine* (in 1995) and then by people like Senator Edward Kennedy, for his service in the black community — a “perfect example,” Kennedy said, of the benefits of affirmative action. But when Chavis was subsequently investigated for gross negligence in connection with a set of botched operations and stripped of his license by the state medical board, the *Times* ignored it.

Similarly, McGowan castigates the media for what he regards as their politically driven avoidance of any connection between police scandals in New York, Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Washington and the lax standards and porous background screening practices that police agencies instituted to increase ethnic diversity in the ranks.

■ The casual acceptance by the establishment media of the virtues of liberal immigration policies and their concomitant failure to report on the burdens and costs that large numbers of poorly educated immigrants impose on schools, law enforcement, welfare agencies, and taxpayers. The same goes, says McGowan, for their studied longtime unwillingness to fully report on the problems generated by attempts to fully integrate women into the armed forces. He cites a *San Diego Union-Tribune* report, based on the Navy's own internal investigation, that attributed the fatal training-accident crash of Lt. Kara Hultgreen, the first female Navy pilot to be assigned to combat duty on a carrier, to her own errors — and thus to “lowered training requirements” and hence to politically

driven “preferential treatment” for women — and not to engine failure, as the Navy's official pronouncements had it. But the *Union-Tribune* story, he says, “received little bounce in the rest of the media.” *The New York Times* called the crash a “gender-neutral tragedy.”

But what bothers McGowan most is the media's embrace of a “multicultural paradigm” that rejects as borderline racism the historic American ideal of assimilation, “encourages immigrants to maintain a hyphenated sense of self and culture,” and fosters divided loyalties. As a consequence, reporting on gangs in Los Angeles, huge school dropout rates, officially neglected child abuse, and a range of other social problems lacks the crucial context — immigration — without which they can't be understood. Accompanying that “multicultural vision,” he sees a growing timidity about controversial black figures like Louis Farrakhan. Stories in the *Los Angeles Times* (1995), *The New York Times* series (1994), and on NPR, for instance, either “deliberately skirted or minimized such issues as the Nation of Islam's bizarre, racist mythology involving mad scientists from thousands of years ago” or advanced “the notion that Farrakhan was a misunderstood figure and that his anti-Semitism was exaggerated.”

Unfortunately, McGowan's argument is weakened by its own lack of context, skepticism, and historical perspective, by his tendency to overstatement and, paradoxically, by his own unquestioning reliance on the media sources — *The New Republic*, *The Wall Street Journal's* opinion pages, plus some conservative columnists — that he trusts. He also seems not to recognize that newspapers (to say nothing of television) rarely give play to undoing stories that later turn out to be wrong, regardless of the subject. The scandal goes on page one; the story that later shows that there was no scandal goes at the bottom of page twenty-three.

Here, too, there's a long list:

■ McGowan pays lip service to the history of cultural and gender isolation of news organizations and to their commendable effort to broaden their ability to cover minority communities. But he seems barely aware of the extent

of that isolation, much less the distortions and the earlier forms of political correctness — not to mention the racism and sexism — it produced in newsrooms and news coverage. He's right, for example, that most papers failed to provide evenhanded coverage on California's Proposition 187, which sought to deny schooling and other social services to illegal aliens and their children, but says nothing of how that myopia might relate to the sensitivity of those papers to their own history of immigrant-bashing or their support for things like the internment of Japanese-Americans in World War II. Over the past 150 years, the media have suffered from political correctness — and worse — of every stripe. That's not an excuse, but it does require a lot more attention than McGowan gives it.

■ He properly berates the media's failure, at least until recently, to report the problems of bilingual education, but doesn't understand that only a fraction of the nation's limited-English-proficient students were ever in classes taught primarily in their native language. Contrary to his assumptions, therefore, their low grades and high dropout rates require a lot of additional explaining. Nor does he mention two recent *New York Times* pieces that tilt in a very different direction: a front-page story in August 2000 celebrating the presumed academic gains made by Latino students that the reporter attributed to the initiative that ended most bilingual programs in California, and a *Times Magazine* piece in 1999 on what the writer, James Traub, saw as the positive outcomes of the state's ban on race preferences in college admission. Both were based on data or on social assumptions that were as questionable as any of the liberal stuff that McGowan attacks the *Times* for. At times, the data McGowan approvingly quotes on minority enrollments at the University of California are so confused that it's hard to tell what he's trying to say.

■ In concentrating on a handful of high-visibility organizations, particularly the *Times*, he ignores important regional papers that have challenged the conventional wisdom on things like affirmative action, bilingualism, and what he describes as "the inherently disrupting presence of women in the military." In my two decades at the editorial page of the center-liberal *Sacramento Bee*, we (and our sister papers in Fresno and Modesto) often questioned the blatant race preferences in University of California admissions and hiring, exposed legislative attempts to pressure UC to graduate blacks and Latinos in proportion to their numbers in the state's high school classes, and challenged practices that, in service of multicultural ideology or just administrative self-interest, locked students into bilingual classes far longer than they should have been.

None of those things refute McGowan's basic argument. During the past decade, a great many newsrooms, driven by publishers, militant organizations of minority journalists, and mandated

"diversity training," have suffered from a stultifying orthodoxy that regards any skepticism about race preferences — and indeed even the phrase — as racist and that too easily dismisses any focus on the connection between unprotected homosexual sex and AIDS as gay-bashing. And although he's hardly the first to do so, he raises telling questions about the narrow meaning of diversity itself. The diversity — in gender, ethnicity, or sexual preference — that newsrooms celebrate has obviously increased their sensitivity about, and their access to, a whole range of stories and issues that were beyond their radar a generation ago. But where, he properly asks, is their understanding of conservative religion, or conscientious opposition to abortion, or familiarity with blue-collar families and/or the culture of the military? Where is real cultural diversity in the newsroom? Diversity management seminars, he says (I think correctly), "often amount to little more than Maoist-style self-criticism sessions that create the very racial and ethnic divisiveness they are supposed to help overcome."

Still, one wishes the book had been

more searching, had given more history and context and been more thoroughly documented. Six months or a year from now, if this war continues, we may become aware of a whole new form of political correctness in the presentation of the news. We've already seen some of it in the ready willingness of the networks to expurgate some bin Laden tapes and in the red-white-and-blue bunting that decorates some of their logos. After two decades of excessive pluribus, to use the formulation of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., this looks like the return of unum. The national gestalt has already been radically changed — on immigration, on the military, even on civil liberties — and it's hard to imagine that the excesses of the old media orthodoxies will completely survive it. McGowan has focused attention on important and troubling issues. Now we need a history that's more nuanced, deeper, richer, and, for all that, maybe even more telling. ■

Peter Schrag was for nineteen years the editorial page editor of *The Sacramento Bee*, for which he continues to write a weekly column.

"Marvin Kalb has given us a richly detailed and provocative account of one of the most tumultuous times in modern American journalism. It is a cautionary tale, told in a compelling narrative. I hope every editor and journalist will read it—even if they disagree with many of its conclusions."

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"I cannot imagine anyone teaching (or understanding) journalism today without the aid of Marvin Kalb's *One Scandalous Story*."

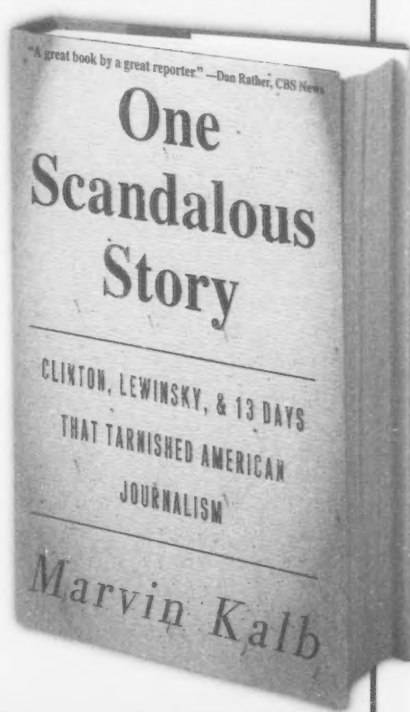
—Stephen Hess, author of *News & Newsmaking*

"No one who seeks to understand how this scandal was covered and how well the media acquitted itself can afford to disregard Kalb's book."

—*Washington Monthly*

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Standards and Practices

BY TOM GOLDSTEIN

This intriguing book offers important insights for journalists, who all too often wrap themselves in their own cocoons, reveling in a specialness that sets them apart from other professionals.

In an unusual collaboration that has lasted for five years and promises to continue on for an even longer period, three prominent psychologists, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi of Claremont Graduate University, William Damon of Stanford, and Howard Gardner of Harvard, examine the professional conditions that promote good work — defined as work in which practitioners maintain moral and

lowed to pursue the mission that inspired them to enter the field in the first place. The authors find that journalism is “poorly aligned,” wracked by tension, with stakeholders “threatening the core values and the principal roles.” The journalists felt that the audience wanted celebrity-based news and that management was preoccupied with the next quarter’s bottom line.

In their interviews, journalists said they were pessimistic because of “growing demands to comply with the business goals of the industry” and the “perceived decline in value and ethics within the field.”

Some of those who were interviewed, including Ray Suarez, Bill Kurtis, and Tom Brokaw, agreed to be named. But most were not named, leaving the reader to accept on faith that the researchers had selected leading practitioners for their semi-structured interviews.

These journalists also lamented that technology had undercut their effectiveness. “Of all the resources in a newsroom it is *time* that is coveted frequently by journalists,” the authors report. “‘Too little time’ was by far the most common complaint mentioned by our informants. Journalists speak of time pressure as a barrier to reflection, in-depth reporting, and accuracy of coverage. There is now an acute sense, shared by most journalists, that modern technology has escalated deadline demands to the point where even the most rapidly executed work can no longer fare adequately.”

In attitudinal studies such as this one, the past is not necessarily a map for the future. The “euphoric” sense of alignment felt by geneticists may shift, the authors speculate, particularly if genetics continues to be practiced as an unregulated commercial undertaking or if the field becomes more politicized.

Journalism, too, may shift. The researchers were heartened by the idealism of journalists in their commitment to inform the public.

Given the timing of the interviews, the “misalignment” that the authors find so decidedly characterizing journalism has a distinctly dated quality to it.

Many of these interviews were conducted during a period in which the biggest running story was the exploits of Monica Lewinsky, and the interviewees

presumably assumed that the public “craved news of celebrities.” Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, journalists have risen to the occasion, a sentiment underscored by Howard Gardner, who in a recent interview in the *Harvard University Gazette* noted that “September 11 has given journalists a new lease on what they should be doing.”

Journalists have another chance. As the authors conclude in their book, this is a “pivotal moment” for journalism in which “the scales are hanging in a precarious balance.” ■

Tom Goldstein is dean of Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism.

GOOD WORK: WHEN EXCELLENCE AND ETHICS MEET

BY MIHALY CSIKSZENTMIHALYI,
WILLIAM DAMON, AND
HOWARD GARDNER
BASIC BOOKS. \$26. 288 PP.

ethical standards — in an increasingly market-driven world.

Since 1995, the authors have conducted hundreds of interviews with people in a variety of disciplines, including business, philanthropy, jazz music, theater, and education. In *Good Work*, the first book to emerge from these studies, the authors make an original and ingenious connection between genetics and journalism, “the two domains that, in our time, have principal responsibilities for shaping the information inside our bodies and our minds.”

The contrasts between the two fields, teased out in more than 200 open-ended, in-depth interviews, are instructive. Geneticists reported that doing good work was relatively easy, while journalists struggled to integrate professional performance and personal ethics.

Geneticists are upbeat in a profession that the authors call exceptionally “well aligned.” That is, all the stakeholders — the shareholders, the company owners, the geneticists, and the public at large — want the same things: research that results in improved health and longer lives.

In sharp contrast, the journalists, who have the “power to shape our culture and our minds,” despaired of being al-

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BOOK REPORTS

BY JAMES BOYLAN

COMMUNITIES OF JOURNALISM: A HISTORY OF AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS AND THEIR READERS

By David Paul Nord
University of Illinois Press. 293 pp.
\$29.95

David Nord of Indiana University, a skilled and incisive practitioner of journalism history, has collected in this volume his essays of the last twenty years, centered on the theme of newspapers and their communities. In the most entertaining, he traces the sources of today's tabloid news to the bizarre occurrences recorded to show the divine hand at work in seventeenth-century New England. At the other end chronologically, he finds that the search of public, or civic, journalism, for a single, unified community fails to come to grips with the realities of power in a divided, "interest-group society." Between, he re-examines the John Peter Zenger case in colonial New York, looks at the role of newspapers in the early national period, studies the emergence of a new urban, community-oriented journalism in nineteenth-century Chicago, and ingeniously tries to reconstruct the readership of magazines and newspapers from the eighteenth into the twentieth century.

PHILO T. FARNSWORTH: THE FATHER OF TELEVISION

By Donald G. Godfrey
The University of Utah Press. 307 pp. \$30

Even today, after belated recognition and the issuance of a postage stamp bearing his likeness, Philo T. Farnsworth is not a household name. Less than Marconi or even the other television pioneer Vladimir K. Zworykin, Farnsworth has remained outside the boundaries of the fame machine. This thorough if laborious biography makes clear why: Farnsworth was born an outsider and remained one. Growing up in rural obscurity in Utah, he began as a teenager to develop his ideas on electronic television (as opposed to the mechanical gadgetry of other early versions),

filed for the first of 130 patents when he was twenty years old, and burned himself out over the next four decades trying to win business success while engaged in a David-Goliath patent war with RCA. He was a talented inventor with a legitimate claim to have fathered TV, not cut out to be a celebrity or legal warrior or businessman, and his health collapsed repeatedly before he died in 1971. The biographer, a telecommunication scholar at Arizona State, was aided by Farnsworth's widow, who lived to see her husband receive deserved credit for his innovative work.

THE BLACK PRESS: NEW LITERARY AND HISTORICAL ESSAYS

Edited by Todd Vogel
Rutgers University Press. 276 pp. \$59;
\$22 paper

This volume is new evidence of the persistent vitality of the black press over more than 170 years. The thirteen essays cover a span from David Walker's *Appeal* (1829), a pioneering antislavery tract, to Internet editions of black newspapers. Among those that stand out: a re-examination by Robert Fanuzzi of the competition between the two most eminent abolitionist editors, the white William Lloyd Garrison and the black Frederick Douglass; an account by Michael Thurston of the poet Langston Hughes's coverage for the American black press of the Spanish Civil War; and a study by C.K. Doreski of the changing and conflicting positions taken by the *Chicago Defender*, a leading black newspaper, on the internment of Japanese and Japanese-Americans during World War II.

FOR THE RECORD: AN ORAL HISTORY OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK, NEWSWORKERS

By Bonnie Brennen
Fordham University Press. 181 pp. \$35;
\$20 paper

Bonnie Brennen of the University of Missouri has compressed the recollections of seventeen rank-and-file Rochester journalists into an outspoken, unsentimental recreation of newspaper work as it was in the decades before and

after World War II. The account starts with typical stories of breaking into the business, but steadily darkens and deepens as it tells of the problems of surviving under the Gannett management of the flagship papers in Rochester—both the old-fashioned reign of Paul Miller and the new dispensation under Al Neuharth, later top dog in the Gannett organization, who pushed hard for professionalism and did his best to destroy the Rochester Newspaper Guild local in the process. Staffers were often caught between union and management, subject to a system of rewards and punishment that favored those who remained passive. Interesting names pass through—Earl Caldwell and Gail Sheehy among them—but this is the story of those who stayed.

VOICES OF REVOLUTION: THE DISSIDENT PRESS IN AMERICA

By Rodger Streitmatter
Columbia University Press. 335 pp. \$49.50;
\$18.50 paper

This crisply organized work could well serve as a textbook. It is comprehensive, clear, and factual, its only weakness being the flat truisms it offers after each major section, e.g.: "Dissident journalists pay a high price for their efforts to provoke social change." Such generalizations are unnecessary; they are implicit in the stories of the variegated and willful company of editors that marches through the pages. Streitmatter, of American University, covers most of the best-known radical newspapers of earlier days—Ida B. Wells's *Free Speech*, the anti-lynching paper; J. A. Wayland's socialist *Appeal to Reason*; Emma Goldman's anarchist *Mother Earth*; Margaret Sanger's *Woman Rebel*, as well as early advocates of sexual freedom. But there is also an ample section on the audacious press of the 1960s, the shortlived mélange of anti-war, anti-racism, pro-gay, and pro-feminist publications that has made everything since seem dull. Those who may complain that the whole dissident press presented here comes from one side of the political spectrum can attempt to do it from the other side. Streitmatter makes clear that he is on the side of those who sought social change from the left.

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A Study of Media Coverage of Health Policy 1997–2000

Mollyann Brodie, Ph.D., Vice President, Director, Public Opinion and Media Research, Kaiser Family Foundation

Drew Altman, Ph.D., President, Kaiser Family Foundation

LeeAnn Brady, Senior Project Director, Princeton Survey Research Associates

Lindsay Heberling, Research Assistant, Kaiser Family Foundation

The debate over President Clinton's national health care reform plan had put health care policy at the forefront of the national agenda in 1993 and 1994. After the Clinton plan failed, it remained to be seen whether or not health policy would hold the media's and the public's interest to the same degree in the years to follow. There seemed to be a consensus of opinion on at least one point — when it came to legislative proposals regarding the nation's health care policies, there would be no further attempt at single sweeping change.

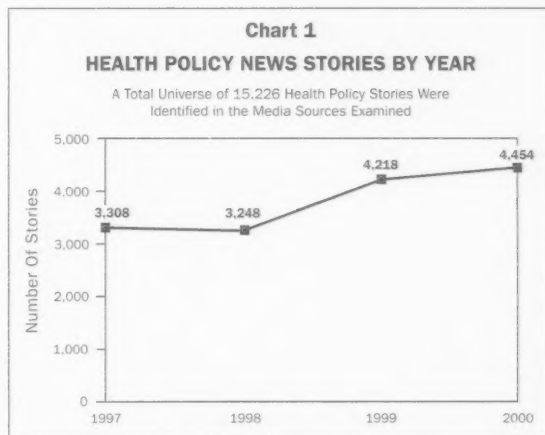
Public opinion data shows that the public continued to be interested in health care policy. As the 1996 Presidential election approached, the public still reported that health care was one of the most important issues influencing their vote. There was, however, no consensus concerning the most important specific health care issue. The public was concerned about a range of health care issues, from Medicare, to rising health care costs, to the uninsured.

With incremental policy proposals likely to dominate debate after the 1996 election, it seemed likely that health policy would become a moving target for the news media. Would coverage of health policy increase or decrease? Which issues would receive the most media attention? Would news stories on health policy present information that would help the public understand policy debates, or would they focus mostly on politics instead?

To help answer these and other questions, a comprehensive study of health policy media coverage from 1997 through 2000 was undertaken by researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation, in conjunction with Princeton Survey Research Associates. An initial examination of media coverage identified four primary health policy topics that governed national debate during this time frame — managed care, Medicare, the uninsured, and health care costs. Over 4,700 health policy news stories were randomly sampled and analyzed from four national newspapers, six major regional newspapers, and three broadcast network news programs (see appendix for details). It is important to note that the study focused only on these four dominant health policy topics and not all health policy issues covered by the media during the time period.

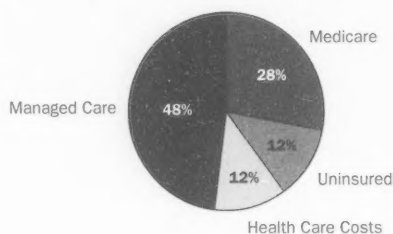
These are the major findings:

1. The amount of coverage devoted to the big health care policy issues increased over time. In the media sources examined, the total number of stories devoted to managed care, Medicare, the uninsured, and health care costs, rose from 3,308 in 1997, to 4,454 in 2000, a 34% increase (Chart 1). While there is always some ebb and flow in the prominence of different issues, the increase suggests that health policy issues have become a permanent fixture on the national agenda. Of special note, coverage of health policy increased at a time when newsroom budgets were generally shrinking. It is no longer possible to run for national office without addressing health issues, nor is it possible to balance the federal budget. As health care has become big money and big league politics, news media coverage has followed suit.



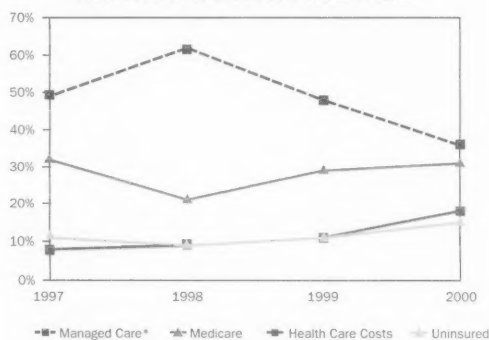
2. Managed care was the health policy topic covered most. Between 1997 and 2000 almost half of all health policy stories (48%) focused on managed care. About 3 in 10 (28%) focused on Medicare, 12% on the uninsured, and 12% on health care costs (Chart 2).

Chart 2
HEALTH POLICY MEDIA COVERAGE 1997-2000



While managed care was the top story over the four-year period, coverage of managed care peaked in 1998, when more than 6 in 10 stories (62%) were devoted to this topic. This was partly a result of the debate over a patients' bill of rights, which drove coverage. By the later half of the study, other health policy issues were receiving increased attention as the Presidential election loomed, most especially, pharmaceutical prices and prescription drug coverage for the elderly. Seniors vote in large numbers, so the candidates talked a lot about the health issues seniors care about most. And when they did, the news media covered the story. The election also brought increased coverage of the uninsured and health care costs so that managed care no longer overwhelmingly dominated coverage of health policy (Chart 3).

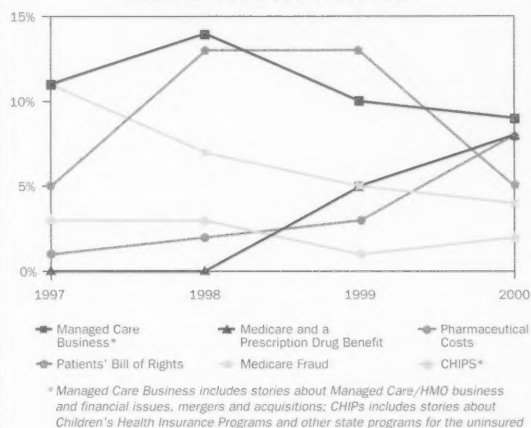
Chart 3
HEALTH POLICY TOPICS OVER TIME



* Managed Care includes stories pertaining to HMOs, health insurance plans, and Patients' Bill of Rights

The data suggests that overall, coverage of health policy followed rather than led national discussion and debate. In fact, almost one half of all health policy stories (49%) were generated by a news event, as opposed to appearing as a backgrounder (26%), editorial or commentary (13%), or some other type of story (12%), such as bullet items. Given this, it is not surprising that the "big stories" or recurring leads journalists relied upon to report the health policy issues varied considerably over the time period of the study (Chart 4).

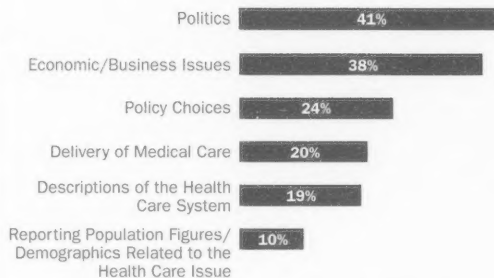
Chart 4
RECURRING LEADS OVER TIME



* Managed Care Business includes stories about Managed Care/HMO business and financial issues, mergers and acquisitions; CHIPS includes stories about Children's Health Insurance Programs and other state programs for the uninsured

3. Politics and economics were the emphasis in health policy coverage. Up to two main focuses were identified in each story. The dominant emphasis was on politics (41% of all stories), such as the impact of a Medicare debate on the election, and economic issues (38%), such as the impact of a prescription drug proposal on the pharmaceutical industry. Fewer stories (24%) emphasized discussion of health policy choices (Chart 5). As might be expected, the focus on politics became more pronounced as the Presidential election approached. Stories on Medicare and the uninsured were much more likely to be written from a political angle than stories about health care costs or managed care, which were more likely to emphasize economic and business issues (Chart 6).

Chart 5
PERCENT OF HEALTH POLICY STORIES WITH A FOCUS ON...

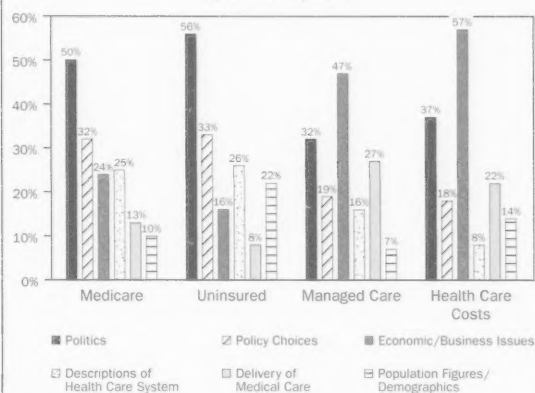


* Adds to more than 100% because each story could have up to two dominant topics

Chart 6

PERCENT OF HEALTH POLICY STORIES WITH A FOCUS ON...

(by Health Policy Topic)



4. Stories that focused on policy choices were likely to provide information that would help a reader or viewer understand the policy options facing decision makers. Of the 1 in 4 stories that focused on policy choices, it was highly likely that the public would gain information to help them understand how policy options would work. More than three-quarters of these policy oriented stories (representing 19% of all stories) had some explanatory content, either presented as the exclusive focus or in conjunction with discussion of the political impact of the policy debate.

Stories about a Medicare prescription drug benefit (62%) and a patients' bill of rights (57%) were most likely to include a focus on policy choice as part of the piece, and 6 in 10 of these stories included explanatory information. Stories about Medicare solvency (50%) and stories about health care in the election (46%) also often included mention of policy choices. However, the election stories most often focused on political considerations, such as which candidate was gaining or losing ground as a result of his or her views on the policy option.

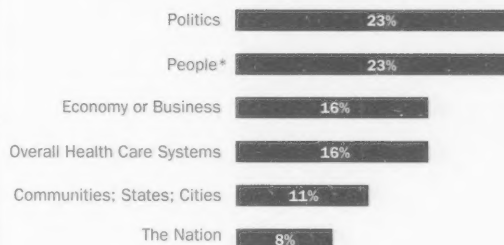
5. A little less than one quarter of all health policy stories included discussion of the impact on people.

A minority of the health policy stories studied included an examination of how the issue might impact people (23%), including patients, families, or beneficiaries of government programs (Chart 7). Stories about the uninsured were most likely to examine the impact on people, with almost half of all uninsured stories (47%) doing so. Medicare stories were less likely to report on the impact on people (24%), and managed care (19%) and health care cost stories (13%) were the least likely to discuss a potential impact on people.

Chart 7

DID THE HEALTH POLICY STORY DISCUSS THE IMPACT OF THE ISSUE AT HAND ON...

Percent "Yes"

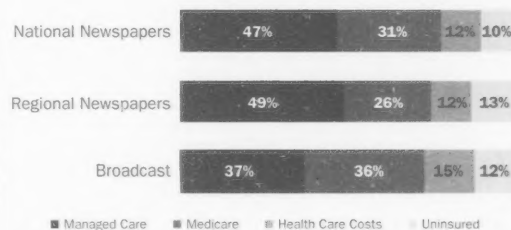


* People includes: individuals/families; Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries; chronically ill; minorities; women and children; seniors; the uninsured; working poor; and the disabled

6. Health policy stories were generally judged to be "balanced." No story in the study that focused on a policy choice did so without giving at least some space or airtime to the views of an opposing side. Over half of all stories (56%) were judged by coders to be "balanced," at least in this respect, giving equal space and time to all sides of the debate. Four in ten stories (44%) were judged to be out of balance in the amount of attention paid to various positions.

Chart 8

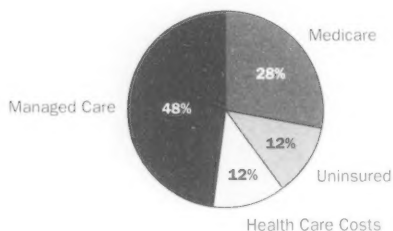
COVERAGE OF EACH HEALTH POLICY TOPIC BY MEDIA



7. There were some differences in the ways that newspapers and television network news covered health policy issues. Network news was less likely than national newspapers to cover managed care (37% vs. 47% of health policy stories), and a little more likely to cover Medicare, health care costs, and the uninsured (Chart 8).

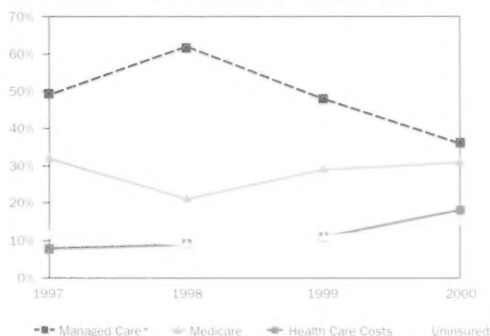
Network news also appeared to put more emphasis on the human side of health care policy, with patients' stories featured in more than 1 in 5 broadcast stories (22% vs. 12% for newspapers). Network news also relied more on anecdotal and often dramatic portrayals. Half of all broadcast stories included anecdotes (51%), compared to 20% of print stories. As might

Chart 2
HEALTH POLICY MEDIA COVERAGE 1997-2000



While managed care was the top story over the four-year period, coverage of managed care peaked in 1998, when more than 6 in 10 stories (62%) were devoted to this topic. This was partly a result of the debate over a patients' bill of rights, which drove coverage. By the later half of the study, other health policy issues were receiving increased attention as the Presidential election loomed, most especially, pharmaceutical prices and prescription drug coverage for the elderly. Seniors vote in large numbers, so the candidates talked a lot about the health issues seniors care about most. And when they did, the news media covered the story. The election also brought increased coverage of the uninsured and health care costs so that managed care no longer overwhelmingly dominated coverage of health policy (Chart 3).

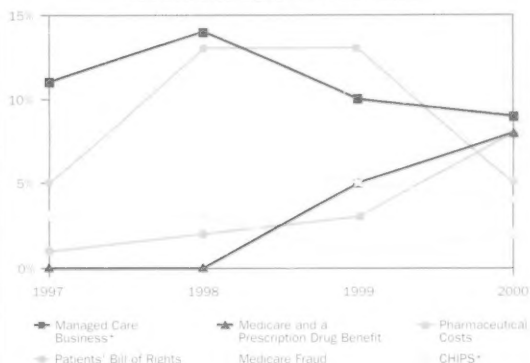
Chart 3
HEALTH POLICY TOPICS OVER TIME



* Managed Care includes stories pertaining to HMOs, health insurance plans, and Patients' Bill of Rights

The data suggests that overall, coverage of health policy followed rather than led national discussion and debate. In fact, almost one half of all health policy stories (49%) were generated by a news event, as opposed to appearing as a backgrounder (26%), editorial or commentary (13%), or some other type of story (12%), such as bullet items. Given this, it is not surprising that the "big stories" or recurring leads journalists relied upon to report the health policy issues varied considerably over the time period of the study (Chart 4).

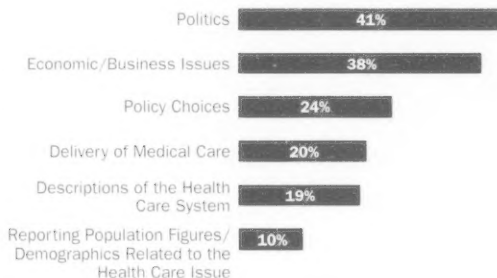
Chart 4
RECURRING LEADS OVER TIME



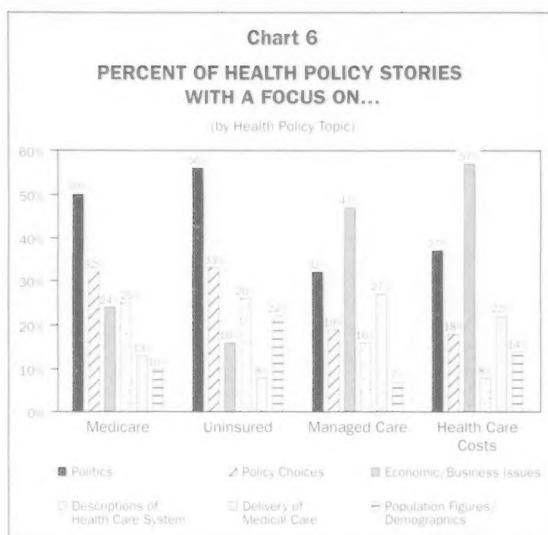
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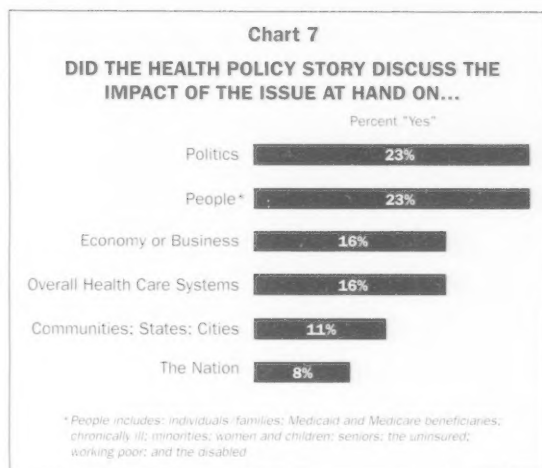


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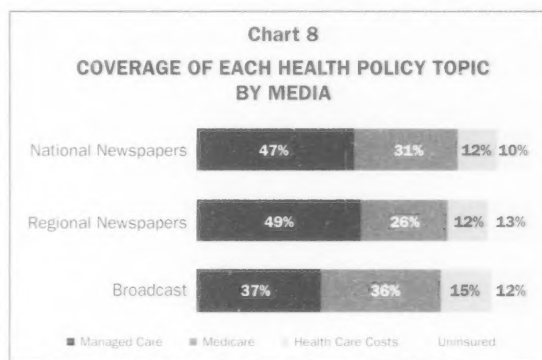
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Network news also appeared to put more emphasis on the human side of health care policy, with patients' stories featured in more than 1 in 5 broadcast stories (22% vs. 12% for newspapers). Network news also relied more on anecdotal and often dramatic portrayals. Half of all broadcast stories included anecdotes (51%), compared to 20% of print stories. As might

be expected, almost 4 in 10 (39%) of the broadcast stories also contained some or high levels of drama compared to 12% of print stories. Broadcast news was twice as likely as print to include villains (30% vs. 12%) in stories. But more than 4 in 5 (87%) of network stories were judged to be balanced in their presentation, giving equal time to all sides of the central debate, while slightly over half (54%) of print stories were judged to be equally balanced in this respect.¹

Conclusion

The fact that the number of stories on the four health policy issues studied increased by 34% during the four-year period suggests that health policy issues have gained a firm foothold on the national and media agenda. That the changes in the topics covered seemed to so closely follow what was in the spotlight in the Congress and in election campaigns suggests that, when it comes to health policy, the news media was more likely to be "following" than "leading" the national agenda. The fact that so many stories focused on politics, and far fewer on policy choices or the impact of problems and policies on people, raises long-standing questions about what the obligations of the media should be. Everyone would agree that the news media should cover major events in health, and no one would argue that every story should focus on policy options or the impact of policy choices on people. However, some might argue for a different balance between event driven and political coverage and informational and explanatory stories. If, on the other hand, you believe that the media's primary obligation is to cover events as they happen — such as political campaigns and legislative debates — and to do so in a fair and balanced way, the data from this four-year study of health policy coverage would be reassuring.

Journalists and media organizations will continue to grapple with another of the implications of this study. It is appropriate that health policy stories are covered from different perspectives — as policy stories, as political stories, as economic and business stories, and as people stories — because the big health policy stories are now truly multidimensional. However, their multidimensional nature poses real challenges for news organizations that will need to decide when a health policy story should be covered by a political reporter, a business reporter, or a health reporter. The challenge for journalists themselves is even more daunting as they have to master so many facets of health policy stories.

The tragedy of September 11th, 2001 and the subsequent events will certainly have a dramatic impact on news coverage of health policy. We can certainly expect to see far less coverage of health policy issues for some period of time. However, the health care problems that were the focus of news events, and, hence, news coverage, have not gone away; they will be bubbling beneath the surface and likely worsening. We can therefore expect that these health policy issues will once again return to prominence in media coverage.

¹ Even if Op/eds and editorials were excluded from the analysis, network stories were still more likely to be judged as balanced.

Appendix — Methodology

Newspaper sources were selected to present a representative sample of health care coverage related to the four policy areas (managed care, Medicare, the uninsured, and health care costs) available to the public. Selections were made on both a geographic and a demographic basis, as well as diversity of ownership. The *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and *USA Today* were selected to represent publications most likely to be circulated amongst either policy makers or the public on a nationwide basis. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Houston Chronicle*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsday*, and the *Seattle Times* represented the nation's major metropolitan dailies.

Assessment began by cataloguing the articles that appeared in each publication from January 1, 1997 through December 31, 2000. The LEXIS-NEXIS database was used to quantify that coverage for all publications except the *Wall Street Journal*, for which the Dow Jones DataBase was utilized. Search language was designed to cast the widest net possible with respect to capturing pertinent stories. A preliminary universe of 47,618 stories was established from which one in every 3.25 stories was selected. Additional inclusion rules were then established. For inclusion, stories must equal or exceed 100 words AND any designated health policy topic must be referenced in the headline, subhead, or 3 lead paragraphs OR 1/3 or more of the text of the article must be directly related to one of the designated health policy topics. Obituaries and letters to the editor were also deleted from the sample. This resulted in the final newspaper total of 4,575 sampled stories, representing the 14,869 story universe of total health policy stories meeting our inclusion criteria in these papers over this timeframe.

Broadcast news stories from *ABC World News Tonight*, *CBS Evening News*, and *NBC Nightly News* were acquired from the Vanderbilt University Television News Archives. To review all stories that appeared January 1, 1997–December 31, 2000, the Vanderbilt archives were searched for all stories where the index monograph included the terms related to this study. This resulted in a total universe of 505 stories. One of every two stories was selected at intervals for the sample after a randomly generated start point. After viewing by senior staff, false hits were eliminated using the established inclusion rule. The resulting network news sample totaled 178 stories.

Intercoder reliability measures the extent to which coders, operating autonomously, code or classify the same story in the same way. Intercoder reliability tests were performed throughout this study, with senior staff acting as the control coder; no significant differences were found to exist on a recurring basis. Selected stories were double-coded in their entirety, and overall intercoder reliability exceeded 88% for all variables.

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The Lower case



AMERICA'S NEW WAR

Japanese still eyeing Hawaii

Honolulu Star-Bulletin 9/27/01

Taxpayer role proposed in future terror acts

The San Luis Obispo Tribune 10/16/01

Go get 'em, even during Ramada

Minot (N.D.) Daily News 9/9/00

Editor's wife rented to 2 suspects, FBI says

Chicago Tribune 10/15/01

Students return to ground zero high

The (Syracuse) Post-Standard 10/10/01

Reserves, National Guard: Who can keep them straight?

St. Louis Post-Dispatch 9/29/01

Nightclub's liquor license denied, close-by Lansing church objects

The (Michigan State U.) State News 10/2/01

Scientists spot plant outside Solar System

Daily Chronicle (Dekalb, Ill.) 8/16/01

■ A photo caption in Wednesday's front section incorrectly identified Rudy Langford of Hampton as chairman of the "Collusion for Justice." There is no such organization. Langford is chairman of the Coalition for Justice.

Daily Press (Newport News, Va.) 8/9/01

Many businesses say English must be spoken on by workers

Montgomery (Ala.) Advertiser 7/8/01

Castro marks 75 years in Venezuelan jungle

The Post-Crescent (Appleton, Wis.) 8/14/01

Collene Campbell champions the rights of murder victims after being one herself more than once

The Orange County Register 9/30/01

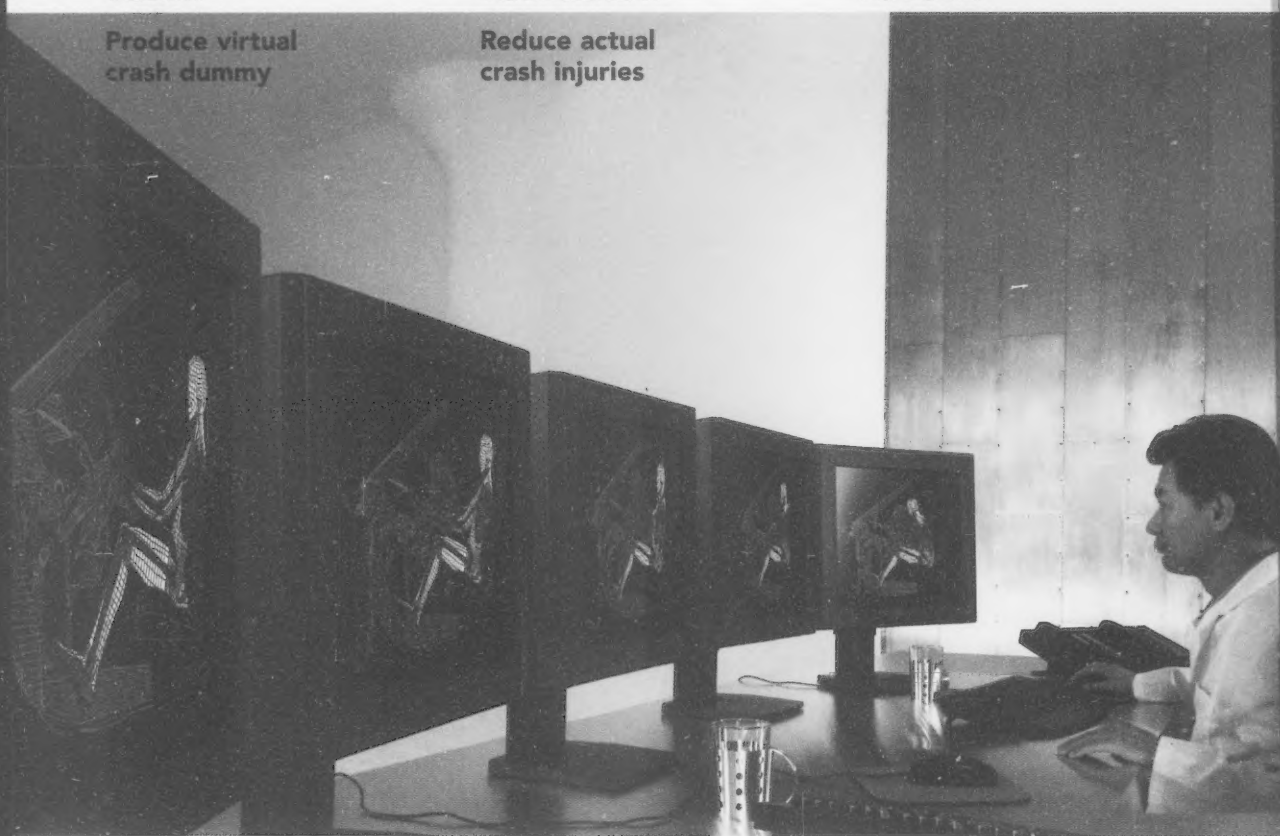
TODAY

Produce virtual
crash dummy

TOMORROW

Reduce actual
crash injuries

TOYOTA



He can't talk, he can't walk, he can't drive a car. Yet he could be the most important "person" in the world of automotive safety testing today. He's THUMS, the world's first virtual human for crash testing.

Developed by Toyota engineers, THUMS can provide a microscopic look at the injuries real people are likely to sustain in a car accident. By analyzing data from THUMS' 80,000 cyberparts, engineers can now zero in on skin, bones, ligaments and tendons—something they were never able to do before.

Although currently only an experiment, technologies like THUMS may one day be used to supplement Toyota's existing safety programs, to make our cars even safer for real human beings. Safer cars—thanks to one very smart dummy.

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